



**A Lenten Service of Word and Prayer  
March 1, 2023**

**Greeting:**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace.

**Amen.**

**Call to Worship:**

In the silence,

**we are listening...**

In this place, away from the attractions and distractions of the world,

**we are listening...**

With hearts open, minds attentive, souls attuned,

**we are listening...**

And as we listen, O God, grant us the capacity to hear your music,  
to feel your rhythm,

**And lead us in spontaneous, joyful improvisation as we seek to  
dance the dance of life.**

## **Prayer:**

Grace and peace from our Savior Jesus Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Lord of the Dance,

**Teach us to follow your life-giving steps and draw all people into your life-dance. In every moment and every space, teach us to hear your music and follow your steps. Make of your Church united in your melody, following your moves of love and justice, and taking the hand of all who would join us in your dance of life.**

**Amen.**

## **Psalm 32 (International Children's Bible)**

*It Is Better to Confess Sin. (A meditation on deep feelings of sadness and distress)*

<sup>1</sup>Happy is the person whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned.

<sup>2</sup>**Happy is the person whom the Lord does not consider guilty. In that person there is nothing false.**

<sup>3</sup>When I kept things to myself, I felt weak deep inside me. I moaned all day long.

<sup>4</sup>**Day and night you punished me. My strength was gone as in the summer heat.**

<sup>5</sup>Then I confessed my sins to you. I didn't hide my guilt. I said, "I will confess my sins to the Lord." And you forgave my guilt.

<sup>6</sup>**For this reason, all who obey you should pray to you while they still can. When troubles rise like a flood, they will not reach them.**

<sup>7</sup>You are my hiding place. You protect me from my troubles. You fill me with songs of salvation.

<sup>8</sup>**The Lord says, "I will make you wise. I will show you where to go. I will guide you and watch over you.**

<sup>9</sup>So don't be like a horse or donkey. They don't understand. They must be led with bits and reins, or they will not come near you."

<sup>10</sup>**Wicked people have many troubles. But the Lord's love surrounds those who trust him.**

<sup>11</sup>Good people, rejoice and be happy in the Lord. All you whose hearts are right, sing.

## **Psalm 51:1-17 (International Children's Bible)**

*A Prayer for Forgiveness. A song of David when the prophet Nathan came to David after David's sin with Bathsheba.*

<sup>1</sup>God, be merciful to me because you are loving. Because you are always ready to be merciful, wipe out all my wrongs.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash away all my guilt and make me clean again.**

<sup>3</sup>I know about my wrongs. I can't forget my sin.

<sup>4</sup>**You are the one I have sinned against. I have done what you say is wrong. So you are right when you speak. You are fair when you judge me.**

<sup>5</sup>I was brought into this world in sin. In sin my mother gave birth to me.

<sup>6</sup>**You want me to be completely truthful. So teach me wisdom.**

<sup>7</sup>Take away my sin, and I will be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Make me hear sounds of joy and gladness. Let the bones you crushed be happy again.**

<sup>9</sup>Turn your face from my sins. Wipe out all my guilt.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a pure heart, God. Make my spirit right again.**

<sup>11</sup>Do not send me away from you. Do not take your Holy Spirit away from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Give me back the joy that comes when you save me. Keep me strong by giving me a willing spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Then I will teach your ways to those who do wrong. And sinners will turn back to you.

<sup>14</sup>**God, save me from the guilt of murder. God, you are the one who saves me. I will sing about your goodness.**

<sup>15</sup>Lord, let me speak so I may praise you.

<sup>16</sup>**You are not pleased by sacrifices. Otherwise, I would give them. You don't want burnt offerings.**

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice God wants is a willing spirit. God, you will not reject a heart that is broken and sorry for its sin.

## **Romans 5:12-19 (International Children's Bible)**

*Adam and Christ. The Death-Dealing Sin, the Life-Giving Gift*

<sup>12</sup> Sin came into the world because of what one man did. And with sin came death. And this is why all men must die—because all men sinned. <sup>13</sup> Sin was in the world before the law of Moses. But God does not judge people guilty of sin if there is no law. <sup>14</sup> But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, everyone had to die. Adam died because he sinned by not obeying God's command. But even those who did not sin in the same way had to die.

Adam was like the One who was coming in the future. <sup>15</sup> But God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. Many people died because of the sin of that one man. But the grace that they received from God was much greater. Many people received God's gift of life by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. <sup>16</sup> After Adam sinned once, he was judged guilty. But the gift of God is different. God's free gift came after many sins. And the gift makes people right with God. <sup>17</sup> One man sinned, and so death ruled all people because of that one man. But now some people accept God's full grace and the great gift of being made right with him. They will surely have true life and rule through the one man, Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> So one sin of Adam brought the punishment of death to all people. But in the same way, one good act that Christ did makes all people right with God. And that brings true life for all. <sup>19</sup> One man disobeyed God, and many became sinners. But in the same way, one man obeyed God, and many will be made right.

<sup>2</sup>**Meditation:**

### **Prayer of Confession and Forgiveness:**

We cannot say we haven't heard it, O God; the music of your reign whispers to us in moments of silence, of prayer, of reflection.

**But, we have listened too quickly or not at all.**

We have seen the life-dance performed, O God, in the creative grace of Christ, and in the improvisation of Christ-followers who dance with no regard for the world's applause.

**But, we have preferred the rigid choreography of law or the chaotic twists of self-interest.**

Though we have longed to dance with you, O God, we have resisted your invitation, we have missed the joy and freedom you offer, and we have stood in the way of others who might have given themselves to your song.

**Sing to us again, O God; play your rhythms of grace for us again, O God; lead us in the life-dance again, O God; and help us to stay in time even when the noise of the world makes it hard to follow you.**

We praise you, O Christ, for the wisdom and courage, that kept you in step with God's improvised dance so that all the world could join you in the ever-changing dance of life. For God so loved the world that God gave the only Son, so that all may receive life. God embraces us with divine mercy, † forgives us in Christ's name, and renews us in the Spirit's power.

**Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer:**

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray...

**C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen**

## **Benediction**

Now we move out into the world,  
**with the music of God in our hearts.**

Now we move through our community,  
**with the steps of Christ guiding our feet.**

Now we move back to our daily tasks,  
**with the rhythms of God's Spirit inspiring our lives. And as we go,  
may we always be attuned to the different drum of God's reign.**

## **Blessing and Sending:**

God, the giver of love, ✝ Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless us in this Lenten journey.

**Amen.**

Go in peace. Serve in love.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Post Notes:**

Definition of "dance" online dictionary:

- 1) Verb: move rhythmically to music, typically following a set sequence of steps.
- 2) Noun: a series of movements that match the speed and rhythm of a piece of music.

*Dance*: the movement of the body in a rhythmic way, usually to music and within a given space, for the purpose of expressing an idea or emotion, releasing energy, or simply taking delight in the movement itself. <https://www.britannica.com>

**References:** Liturgy: Lent 1A: "A Different Drum", *Dancing with the Light: A Journey in Worship for Lent*, John van de Laar, Sacredise, 2011.

<sup>2</sup>Woods, Len. "When The Idea Of Repenting Leads You Cold," Chapter 10, *Spiritual Life Hacks: Uncommon Solutions to Common Challenges*. Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2019, 65-67.