

New Castle Presbyterian Church

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New Castle Presbyterian Church ~ Built 1707 ~ New Castle, Delaware

Ash Wednesday

February 14, 2024

7:00 pm

GATHERING

Prelude

Ah, Holy Jesus

By Michael Larkin

Reading

Tune My Heart

By Rev. Sarah A. Speed

Call to Worship

The conductor is tapping their baton; the concert is about to begin.

Before an orchestra plays, they must tune their instruments.

This process may be very loud and create lots of dissonance.

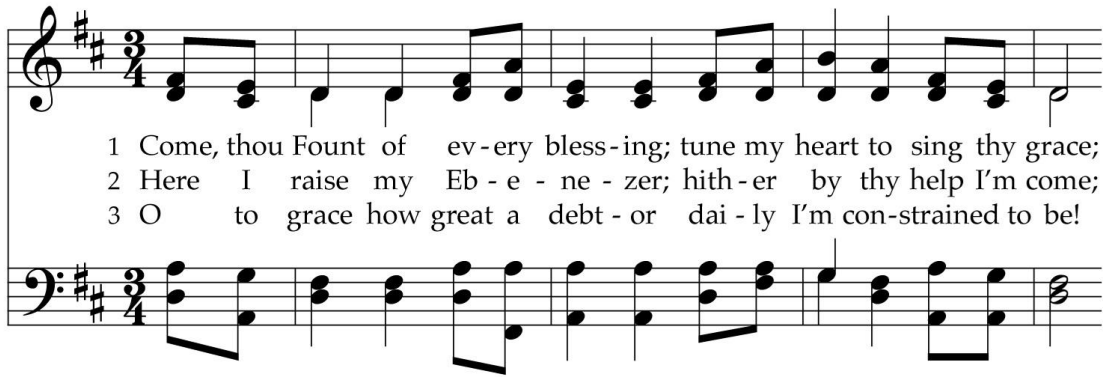
But tuning is a necessary step to creating harmonies and melodies.

As we begin the season of Lent, let us turn inward and tune our hearts.

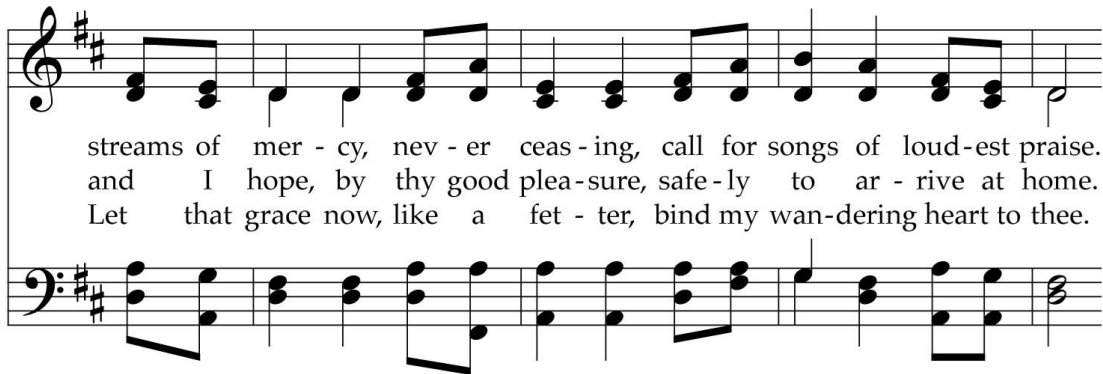
Let us tune the instruments of our heart to make a joyful noise with God.

HYMN #475

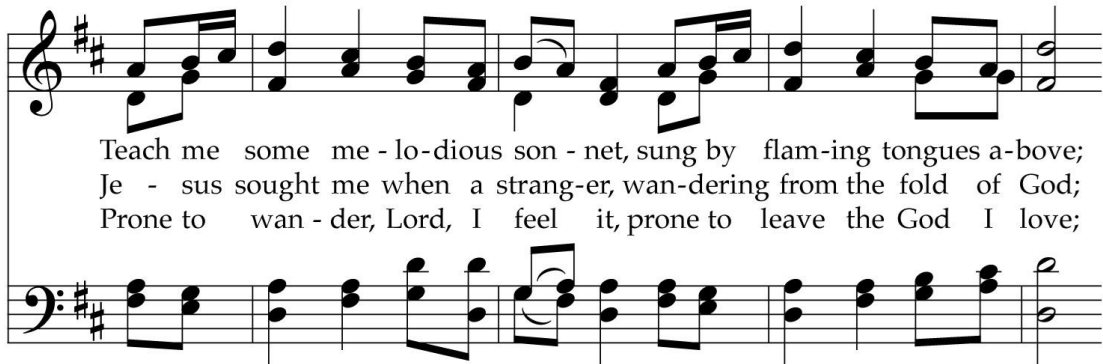
Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing



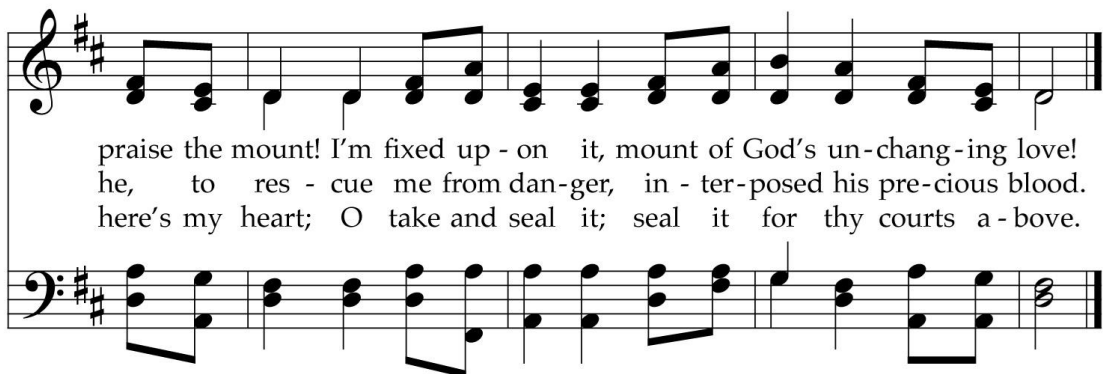
1 Come, thou Fount of ev-ery bless-ing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - e - ne - zer; hith - er by thy help I'm come;
3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be!



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan - dering heart to thee.



Teach me some me - lo - dious son - net, sung by flam - ing tongues a - bove;
Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan - dering from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;



praise the mount! I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un - chang - ing love!
he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.
here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Written for Pentecost by a British Baptist pastor, this text is full of biblical terms like "Ebenezer" (1 Samuel 7:12), Hebrew for "a stone of help" set up to give thanks for God's assistance. The tune name honors hymnal compiler Asahel Nettleton, who probably did not compose it.

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 51:1-12

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.


⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. ⁶ You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. ⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

HYMN #444


Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive

Capo 5: (Am) (Dm) (Am) (C) (Em) (Am)
Dm Gm Dm F Am Dm



1 "For - give our sins as we for - give," you taught us, Lord, to pray,
2 How can your par - don reach and bless the un - for - giv - ing heart
3 In blaz - ing light your cross re - veals the truth we dim - ly knew:
4 Lord, cleanse the depths with - in our souls and bid re - sent - ment cease.

(F) (Em) (C) (Dm) (Em)(Am)
B^b Am F Gm Am Dm



but you a - lone can grant us grace to live the words we say.
that broods on wrongs and will not let old bit - ter - ness de - part?
what triv - ial debts are owed to us, how great our debt to you!
Then, by your mer - cy rec - on - ciled, our lives will spread your peace.

Few petitions of the Lord's Prayer are as difficult to pray as this one, and we would not dare to pray it if we had to depend on ourselves rather than the example of forgiveness we are given in Jesus Christ. The shape note tune sets these words with appropriate spareness.

TEXT: Rosamond E. Herklots, 1969, 1983, alt.
MUSIC: *Supplement to Kentucky Harmony*, 1820; harm. Margaret W. Mealy, 1985
Text © 1969, 1983 Rosamond E. Herklots
Music Harm. © 1985 GIA Publications, Inc.

DETROIT
CM

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE

Friends in Christ, every year at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life in the paschal mystery. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marks the penitence of this community.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of love, and by reading and meditating on the Word of God. Let us turn to God, our Creator and Redeemer, and confess our sin.

CONFESSION

Holy Creator, you fashioned us from the dust and called us so very good. Your fingerprints remain all over us. Don't let us forget that we come from the earth and every day is a gift from you.

But some days we'd rather be safe and sound, where nothing can touch us. We encase our gifts in glass boxes and set them high on a shelf. We prefer to be secure rather than risk scraped knees, hurt feelings, missteps, or mistakes.

In the hills and in the valleys, tune our hearts to hear your voice. Journey with us, accompanying us on our wandering ways. Lift our heads to witness your majesty. Fill our hearts with courage to love as you love us. Amen.

Behold, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.

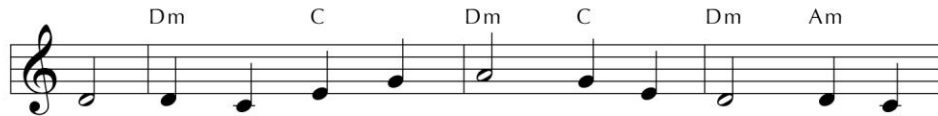
Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

The ashes are imposed with the following words:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

HYMN #215 What Wondrous Love Is This



1 What won - drous love is this, O my soul, O my
 2 When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing
 3 To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will
 4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul, what won - drous love is this, O my soul! What
 down, when I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when
 sing, to God and to the Lamb, I will sing; to
 on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and



won - drous love is this that caused the Lord of
 I was sink - ing down be - neath God's righ - teous
 God and to the Lamb who is the great I
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joy - ful



bliss to bear the dread - ful curse for my soul, for my
 frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul, for my
 AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing, I will
 be, and through e - ter - ni - ty, I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul, to bear the dread - ful curse for my soul!
 soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul!
 sing; while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing!
 on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

With its ballad-like repetitions before and after each stanza's central narrative lines, this meditative text needs performance in order to be effective. Its haunting melody proves the means of convincing us that the only adequate response to "wondrous love" is to "sing on."

BLESSING

Children of God, as you leave this place, may you wear your curious heart on your sleeve and look for God in every face. May you find the courage to get out of the boat, to run to the tomb, and to speak of your faith. And when the world falls apart, may you hear God's voice deep within saying, "Take heart, it is I, be not afraid." **Amen.**

Marked with the cross of Christ, go forth to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

*You are welcome to remain in peaceful contemplation
and invited to leave in quiet when ready.*

Worship Leadership: Rev. Miriam Foltz and Eileen Larkin

Join us for the New Castle Ecumenical Lenten Dinners on Wednesdays at 6 p.m., beginning
February 21 at New Castle Presbyterian Church.

Wandering Heart Lenten Devotionals are available in the Meeting House Entrance.

Today's liturgy draws from Sanctified Art's Wandering Heart Lenten Series, copyright 2023.

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