



FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1000 Douglas Avenue, Las Vegas, NM 87701

March 2, 2022

5:30 p.m.

MEDITATION – *Listen in silence because if your heart is full of other things you cannot hear the voice of God.* - Mother Teresa

ASH WEDNESDAY

WELCOME AND A WORD ABOUT LENT

Rev. Katie Palmer

CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from Psalm 23)

Rev. Randy Campbell, HR; Rev. Pat Halverson

One: The Lord is our shepherd

All: Who restores us and leads us in right paths.

One: Even when we walk through dark valleys, we will not fear

All: For God is with us always, guiding us with the rod and staff of grace.

One: The Lord anoints us, fills us, and pours goodness and mercy upon us.

All: Surely we will dwell in God forever!

OPENING HYMN *Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling* (GTG #418)

CALL TO REPENTANCE

LITANY OF REPENTANCE

One: Jesus says to us in John's gospel, "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."

All: We think of the times, O God, when we have not listened for Jesus' voice. We ask your forgiveness and your patience with us as we learn how to recognize the voice of your love.

(Pause and remember those times you have not listened for Jesus' voice.)

One: Jesus says, "When he has brought out all his own, the shepherd goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."

All: We think of the times, O God, when we have followed the voice of strangers who spoke louder, who were flashier, who promised us a way that we were tricked into believing was better than your way. We ask your forgiveness and your patience with us as we learn how to distinguish your voice from the stranger's.

(Pause and remember those times you have followed the voice of a stranger to Jesus' love.)

One: Again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them.

All: Again we think of the times, O God, when we have not listened to the shepherd’s voice, and when we have listened to the voices of thieves and bandits who took from us time spent in your way. We ask your forgiveness and your patience. Guide us to your gate, the gate of salvation.

(Pause and think of the times when you have made choices that took you away from God’s path.)

One: Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

All: Gracious God, we have not fully lived this gift of life you gave to us. We have often failed to hear your voice or to follow it. Help us, throughout this Lenten season, to pause in silence and to listen for your voice so that we will be able to recognize it wherever and however it comes to us. We open ourselves to your grace-filled forgiveness and offer thanks for your patience with us as we prepare to receive the ashes of repentance. As we feel them being placed on our foreheads, may we commit anew to following your voice. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE ASHES AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*If you are in the sanctuary, please come forward to receive the imposition of ashes and to hear the words,
“Repent and follow the voice of Christ.”*

*If you are joining us online, please make the sign of the cross on your forehead and say to yourself,
“Repent and follow the voice of Christ.”*

SCRIPTURE READING: John 10:11-18

[Jesus said,] ‘I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.’

MEDITATION

Listening for the Voice of the Good Shepherd

Rev. Katie Palmer

UNISON PRAYER OF HOPE

Gracious and Holy God, reminded of our mortality by the ashes we now wear, may we also be reminded of the gift of life you give to us. You offer yourself as the voice that identifies us as your people and that invites us into abundant life with one another. We trust now that you will send us out, knowing that we are still learning to follow your voice and guiding us to listen for your word that speaks love, grace, and full life to us. Remind us that you transform our lives through the power of your voice and prepare our ears to hear that power. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN *Will You Come and Follow Me* (GTG #726)

BENEDICTION

--Please leave in silence--

~ Thank you to Rev. Randy Campbell, Rev. Pat Halverson, our musicians, and our tech crew for participating in this evening’s service. ~