



**seeking:**  
*Is this the fast  
that I choose?*



SAINT LUKE'S

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Ash Wednesday

February 22, 2023 6:30 pm



## In Preparation for Worship

“You said return to me, so here I am, skin and bones held together with memories and a little bit of duct tape. I am bringing the worst of me, consider yourself warned. You said you’d take it all, so here I come. Me and all my humanity.”

- *On My Way*, Rev. Sarah A. Speed

## Prelude

Come, Sweet Death

J.S. Bach

## Call to Worship\*

Leader: We gather together at the edge of a new season.

People: **We stand together on the cusp of something new.**

Leader: Will we wade into self-reflection?

People: **Will we invite honesty to dance?**

Leader: Will we listen for God’s invitation?

People: **Will we seek deeper faith?**

Leader: What kind of fast do we choose? What kind of faith will we build?

People: **We gather together at the edge of a new season.**

ALL: Listen, God is speaking.

## Opening Hymn\* 167

Forty Days and Forty Nights

## Prayer of Confession\*

Merciful God,

How many times in a day could we choose love?

How many times could we choose justice?

How many times could we speak kindly to ourselves?

How many times could we offer grace?

How many times, God? And how often do we miss it?

Forgive us for choosing the path you did not travel.

Forgive us for hitching our horse to the world’s measure of goodness, instead of yours.

Return our hearts to you, and guide us continually, even in the parched places.

With gratitude we pray,

Amen.

## Assurance of Forgiveness\*

## Prayer for Illumination

## Scripture Reading

Isaiah 58:1-12

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

## Anthem

God So Loved the World

John Stainer  
The Chancel Choir

## Meditation

Seeking

Shannon Dill

## Invitation to the Imposition of Ashes

### Prayer Over the Ashes and The Lord's Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

### Imposition of Ashes

*Those who desire may come forward in order to receive the imposition of ashes in the form of a cross on the forehead, or on the back of the hand.*

*The ashes signify that we exist and are loved by the grace of God.*

### Affirmation of Faith\*

from A Sanctified Art inspired by the words of Isaiah 58

We believe in a God who chooses freedom,  
who unties every rope and carries our burdens.  
We believe in a God who ushers in the poor and the hungry,  
who has a seat saved for all of us.  
We believe in a God whose love is like the sun,  
who says, "I'm here, I'm here!" every time we cry.  
We believe in a God who walks before us in the parched places,  
who rescues our bones,  
who tends to us like a gardener.  
And because we believe,  
we strive to choose love.  
Because we believe,  
we strive to pursue justice.  
Because we believe...  
Amen.

### Hymn\* 166

Lord Who Throughout These Forty Days

## **Blessing and Charge\***

As you leave this place,  
may God bless you with seeking.  
Seek out the hungry.  
Seek the weary.  
Seek the good in every person you pass. Seek out the hopeful.  
Seek the faithful.  
Seek God in each of us.  
As you seek and as you wonder,  
may you find what you are looking for. In the name of our loving God,  
who is always seeking us,  
go now in peace. Amen.

## **Postlude\***

Andante

Felix Mendelssohn

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*Many of today's worship elements are written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)*