



# seeking:

*Who will you  
listen to?*



"Who Will You Listen to?" by [Lauren Wright Pittman] | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

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# Memorial Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

February 26, 2023

**SEEKING: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith**

## GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

*Wild God of wilderness,  
as we devote these forty days to you,  
shape us by your Holy Spirit  
into the image of Christ our Lord,  
so that we may be ready, by your grace,  
to confront the power of death  
with the promise of eternal life. Amen.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Benediction

Keith Snell

BRINGING THE LIGHT

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Listen!

**There is hope to be found here.**

Listen!

**God calls you by name here.**

Listen!

**There is love that abides here.**

This world is full of chatter, so may we do our best to listen.

**God is speaking.**

Let us worship.

**Amen.**

\*SONG OF PRAISE

Who Will You Listen To?

Bulletin p. 7

\*CONFESSION AND PARDON

**Holy God,**

**Too often we treat your Word like a radio station—something we can tune in and out of when it's convenient. Our minds are full of ads, emails, news updates, and notifications. In the midst of this clutter, we tend to gravitate toward the voices that think like us—easily ignoring the voices being silenced, easily ignoring your voice. Forgive us for failing to listen. Forgive us for getting caught in distractions. Forgive us for forgetting what your voice sounds like. Drain the distractions from our minds and help us turn once again toward you.**

**With earnest hearts we pray, amen.**

*(Time of silent reflection)*

\*DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

I am loved!

**I am loved!**

I am held in grace!

**I am held in grace!**

I belong to God.

**I belong to God.**

Amen.

\*THE PEACE

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

\*SONG OF RESPONSE

Glory to God

Hymnal, No. 582

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,

And to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,

And to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen

World with-out end, with-out end. Amen (x3)

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

### PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Jim Rodriguez

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Page No. 2

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSIVE PSALM

Psalms 32

Happy

are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

**Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

**For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah**

Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah

**Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.**

You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. Selah

**I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.**

Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.

**Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.**

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 4:1-11

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Page No. 785

MESSAGE

Who Will You Listen To?

Tracy L. Evans

\*SONG OF FAITH

Seek Ye First

Hymnal, p. 175

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

In a world full of noise,

**we believe that God is speaking.**

In a world full of chaos,

**we believe that God is singing.**

In a world full of temptation,

**we believe that God is healing.**

Church, who will you listen to?

**We will listen to God—our Creator, Friend, and Guide.**

Church, what will you listen for?

**We will listen for water in the desert,**

**for the wind of the Spirit,**

**for the laughter of children,**

**for the sound of open doors,**

**and for God's voice, who calls us beloved.**

**Amen.**

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

LORD'S PRAYER

Hymnal, page 35

THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

\*DOXOLOGY

God of All Living

Hymnal, No. 713 vs 4

God of all living, God of all loving,

God of the seedling, the snow, and the sun,

Teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,

Using us gently and making us one.

\*DEDICATION PRAYER

**FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD**

\*SENDING SONG

Lord, Who Throughout these Forty Days

Hymnal, No. 166

\*TAKING LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

\*BLESSING AND CHARGE

\*POSTLUDE

Paulistana No. 1

Claudio Santoro

\*Please rise in body or spirit.

We invite anyone who wishes to consider membership in this church to contact the pastor or a member of the session. You may also indicate interest in membership by checking the appropriate column in the ritual of friendship booklet. Membership in this church is a step made by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith or transfer of church letter.

**Lectionary Readings** for March 5 Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9

The Food & Shelter items of the month for February **are reusable flatware and coffee mugs. Please place your donations in the box by the church information table. Hearing-assistance devices and large print hymnals are available from the head usher.**

**Hearing-assistance** devices and **large print hymnals** are available from the head usher.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT  
seeking: Who will you listen to?

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who will you listen to?

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Digital painting

To give insight into my world when creating this piece, I was recovering from an unexpected postpartum surgery. I read the text, and then weeks of internal wrestling ensued. I felt angry, defiant, and it was all personal. Like a rebellious teenager, I poked holes in the text with hopes it would crumble; but why?

When we found out we'd be collaborating with Danielle Shroyer, one of my colleagues suggested her book, *Original Blessing*, as a resource for my text study. I'm grateful for her work, because it helped me see why this text felt so burdensome. In my early faith formation, this narrative was taught as the origin story explaining human nature, sin, suffering, and death. It was the text I thought of when I had menstrual cramps. I would mutter, "Thanks, Eve," under my breath, blaming her; but I realize I was also blaming myself for my own pain. It was the text that justified distrust in myself.

It turns out, I am not alone. Shroyer writes, "We make demands upon the text that it simply isn't willing to meet. And in terms of sheer volume, on a scale of pure expectation, there is perhaps no more loaded passage of scripture than Genesis 3." So much of my faith was built on this text as though it was foundational in the first place, and consequently, much of my understanding of my faith, myself, and even the gospel itself was colored by this narrative.

While engaging with this text, the pain I was feeling in my body from childbirth complications felt like punishment. I raged against this text because I felt it raging against me.

Beware of the ways deeply-rooted, harmful theology bubbles up in your life. In this case, for me it surfaced as thoughts of shame, self-blame, self-distrust, self-deprecation, and self-hatred. Ask yourself, "Who will I listen to?" I was giving power to a hermeneutic that wasn't even in line with who God has revealed God's self to be, and the image of God that I bear.

I decided to create this piece in monochromatic cool tones, contrasting with the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (in orange) and God's wisdom (in gold) surrounding them. In hindsight, I realize I was visualizing my emotional journey with the text. The cool tones represent the heaviness and confusion I felt with this familiar story, and the high contrast mimics the way this text has made me feel separate and isolated from God. The woman's expression holds the weight and the pain caused by the ways this text has been used to subjugate women and to prop up destructive doctrines and a distorted gospel.  
—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

# who will you listen to?

LEONI ("The God of Abraham Praise")

Text: Anna Strickland (2022)

Music: Meyer Lyon (1770)

The So A voi - ces from the ci - e - ty de - rush - ing flood of past mands hate That We In ech - o through our al - ways strive for news we of - ten

minds Like noi - sy ghosts haunt and har - ass With words un - more Ac - cum - u - lat - ing wealth and land And leave the see Con - ceals God's king - dom in a great Ca - co - pho -

- kind Who will we lis - ten to? Lies that bind and a - base? Or poor Who will we lis - ten to? The temp ter's jea - lou - sy? Or - ny Who will we lis - ten to? The cha - os all a - round? Or

God who coun - ters words un - true With words of grace? God's pro - vis - ion and pur - suit Of e - qui - ty? God's dream of a world made new Where love a - bounds?

Descant

Al - le - lu - ia,

1 Seek ye first the king - dom of God  
 2 Ask, and it shall be giv - en un - to you;  
 3 You shall not live by bread a - lone,

al - le - lu - ia,

and its righ - teous - ness,  
 seek, and you shall find;  
 but by ev - ery word

al - le - lu - ia,

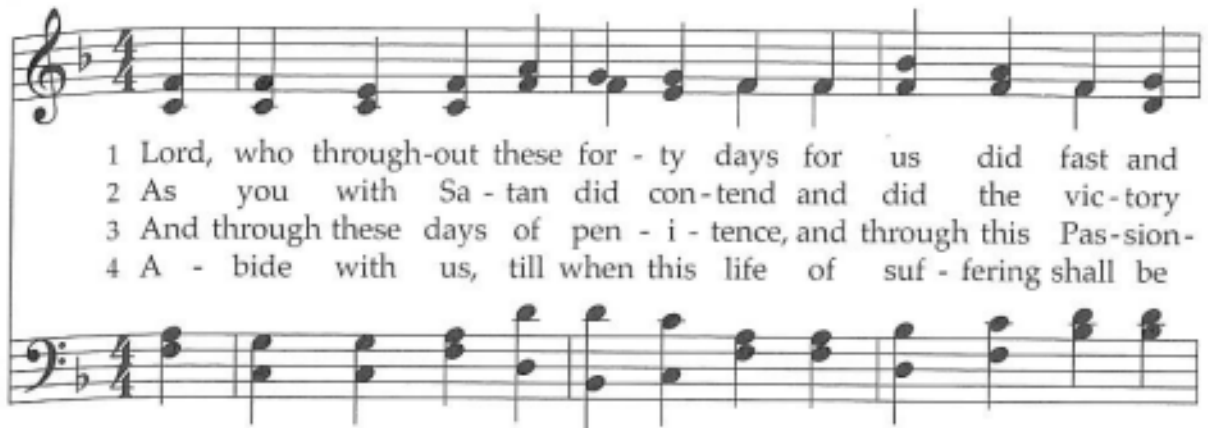
and all these things shall be add - ed un - to you.  
 knock, and the door shall be o - pened un - to you.  
 that pro - ceeds from the mouth of God.

al - le - lu - ia!

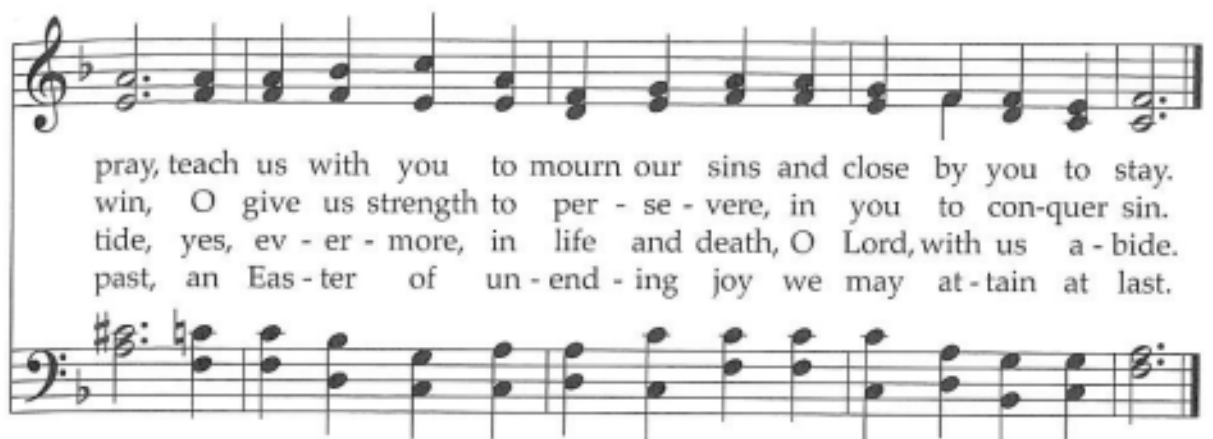
Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia!

# Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days

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1 Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and  
2 As you with Sa - tan did con-tend and did the vic-tory  
3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas-sion-  
4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be



pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.  
win, O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con-quer sin.  
tide, yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.  
past, an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at-tain at last.