

Generous People Living God's Love  
...by pausing to experience God's presence in silence

*“Be still and know that I am God” Psalm 46:10a*

This year, our Ash Wednesday service was in the form of Taize, with the dimly lit sanctuary full of candles, and the worship decadent with prayerful pauses.

As a talkative person, I both welcomed and questioned the intentional pauses we had planned for this worship service. Could we really begin the season of Lent in so much silence — aren't we supposed to talk about our wonderful theme for Lent? Plus, due to a combined worship service with another congregation, we happened to have 4 Pastors present and 2 seminary students. So many great preachers to choose from! Yet, we embraced the silence of the evening and, after the Gospel reading, let the sermon time be 7 minutes of silence, to listen for the Holy Spirit. It turns out that silence is rich with texture: our dimly lit lights had a gentle hum, the neighbor's dog offered a barking solo for a minute or two, traffic drove by our church on the road out front, feet tapped softly on the sanctuary floor inside, throats were cleared, and we sat together in auditory abundance.

God makes our lives abundant with expressions of love and life which surround us. How do we pause in silence during this season of Lent, to experience God's presence and hear anew the Holy Spirit's calls for our congregation?

~ Pastor Barbara Foltin, Stewardship Discipling Team

Discussion questions:

1. Is it easier for your congregation to be still in the silence of God's presence or to be noisily active in mission?
2. How can you as leaders embrace more fully these ways of being a church in mission? What does the Holy Spirit say when you listen?
3. How can your congregation be God's generous people living God's love by pausing to experience God's presence in silence this Lent?