

A Willing Spirit by Rev. Dr. Robin Hawley Gorsline

At our beautiful Ash Wednesday service, Rev. Cathy spoke of Psalm 51, drawing special attention to verses 10-12.

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

The lines are familiar to me, remembering all the Lents past when I heard them, hoping to live more in a clean heart. For a long time I have believed that God never casts me away and never takes the Holy Spirit from me. Of course, there are times when it may feel like God is absent, even though I know—I know—God is never absent from me or anyone else.

But it is the last couplet that caught my attention the other night: “Restore in me the joy of your salvation and sustain in me a willing spirit.”



I love so much about MCCDC—our pastors and lay leaders, members, the preaching, and music and drama and dance and pastoral care ministries. I rejoice every time I enter the sanctuary, especially seeing the word JOY on the front wall. I go up to it many Sundays to pray, feeling restored every time.

But *willing spirit*.....frankly I had not paid much attention to that term until I listened to Rev. Cathy. This time, it caught my heart and opened me to some tears of recognition, how much I yearn for a more willing spirit, a spirit less governed by my to do list, less obsessed with the latest squabble with my husband and/or dog and/or friend, and a host of other irritants and anxieties.

I realized I want a spirit of willingness, a life centered in willingness, a soul attuned to all that God has for me, all God calls me to be, do and hear and love, all the times God calls me to create right relation with God, with myself, with my family and communities and the world.

That helped me understand I need to listen more, watch more, open my heart and my over-busy mind, my whole body, to all the ways God is touching me. I often say, "With God there is always more." The other night I remembered that God is always reaching out to me, always touching me, always beckoning to me to follow the path of life and love and hope and justice and faith. And joy.

So, today, I am more willing to pay attention to God and God's yearning for me than to the troubles that so often overrun my spirit. *More willing is good, most willing and always willing would be even better.* This Lent I am working on it, with God's help.