



**ST NINIAN'S
UNITING CHURCH
PRAYERS &
REFLECTION
MARCH 4TH, 2026
BASED ON
EZEKIEL 36:22-32**

Ezekiel 36:25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.



Ezekiel 36:22-32

²²Therefore say to the house of Israel: Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. ²³I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations and which you have profaned among them, and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when through you I display my holiness before their eyes. ²⁴I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness's, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put my spirit within you and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. ²⁸Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹I will save you from all your uncleanness's, and I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. ³⁰I will make the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field abundant, so that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. ³¹Then you shall remember your evil ways and your dealings that were not good, and you shall loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds. ³²It is not for your sake that I will act, says the Lord God; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and dismayed for your ways, O house of Israel.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious Lord, I come once again to acknowledge although I live thousands of years after your great prophet Ezekiel, I also need to experience renewal and restoration. In the same way you promised Ezekiel, I ask that you cleanse my heart and spirit and create within me a new heart and a steadfast spirit. Help me to turn away from doing the wrong thing and embrace doing only what is right in your eyes. May your grace and mercy renew my soul so that I in word and action glorify your name and reflect your love in a troubled and distrusting world. In the name of the Holy Spirit. I pray Amen

PRAYERS OF THANKS, PRAISE

Thanks and praise a whole bunch

D.A. MARCUM

For the warmth of your ways....
For your sunshine and cheer
On the gloomiest of days –

Thanks and praise a whole bunch
For the thoughts you've expressed
The nice things you've done
And for all the rest....

For smiles and for laughter
For 'talk' and for sharing
For being 'true blue'
And mostly.....for caring.

Thanks and praise a whole bunch –
And promise me, too
That whatever else changes
You'll always be You!

FORGIVENESS

A whole bunch of Forgiveness please
For a lack of trust and honesty
For not being gratified or satisfied with what I have
Forand my thoughtlessness.

A whole bunch of forgiveness please
For not having ears and eyes open
to hear and see those seeking
For a lack of discipline.....and other transgressions.

A whole bunch of forgiveness please
For not being open to receive renewal
For possessing a hard heart
For being too ashamed to speak your word of boundless grace to others who are yet
to know your love and mercy.

WORDS OF GRACE

The Lord, the Lord is a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Exodus 34:6-7

REFLECTION

One of the things I love about Ezekiel is his use of imagery to help tell his story of faith and future of God's actions the world. I'm not to be disappointed in our reading of hope and restoration from God to the people of Israel this week. As the reading progresses, we hear about their experiences of suffering and unwillingness to take more care in their listening to what God was saying leading up to their exile. Despite their struggles, God's compassion shines through as God promises to act for the sake of God's name, maintaining God's credibility indicating that God's actions aren't just about the people's merit but rather God's characteristics and faithfulness.

The Lord starts by asserting that God will gather the people from all nations, reminding us that God's love is boundless of time and place. The imagery of cleansing is strong; it symbolises not only the removal of our wrongs, for those who have come to know God it's a fresh start. Remembering our baptism, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you,' God promises, a metaphor for purification and renewal. This is inclusive of a physical cleansing and a far deeper spiritual renewal, placing an importance on the changes taking place within ourselves as we move away from who we were to who we have become.

God, declares that God will give us a new heart and a new spirit. This transformative change is crucial-we can't do the necessary changes within us without God if we truly desire the renewal to take place. The promise suggests a divine intervention in the very essence of a person, empowering us to willingly live our life according to the God's command and Christ's command to love God and others as you would be loved. The 'heart of stone' is replaced with a 'heart of flesh' revealing the possibility of shifting from hardness and rebellion to softness allowing ourselves to hear God speaking to us and witnessing God's action in the world.

Too often we dismiss the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament but here Ezekiel clearly emphasises the giving of the Holy Spirit, showing the existence of an intimate relationship between God and God's people. The Spirit becomes the guiding influence, enabling them to walk in God's laws and follow God's commands. This relationship transforms obedience from being just a duty to perform into a joyful response to the love God has given the people.

God's promise to restore Israel isn't only relevant to the ancient people of Israel it offers insights for us in the here and now. It reveals that no one is beyond forgiveness. Just as God sought to restore Israel, God continues to reach out to us in our own brokenness and sinfulness, God is still inviting us to receive God's grace and renewal.

As you sit and quietly reflect on the words of Ezekiel, I hope you are also challenged to look deeply into your heart and acknowledge areas in your life which you can see where change is needed. We are assured of God's unwavering commitment to cleanse, renew, and empower us to live in faithful and right relationship with God. Ultimately, Ezekiel assures us that God's purpose overtakes our failures, moving steadily toward restoration and fulfillment.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Gracious and merciful God,

After sitting and reflecting on the words of Ezekiel, I come with a heart filled with thanks and praise for promise of restoration. As you have declared in Ezekiel, cleanse us all and create a new heart and spirit in all people around the world. I intercede here for our communities and nations asking for your transformative power to soften hardened hearts and lead people to name and seek forgiveness for their wrongs. I pray for peace to descend upon your world created out of love, and to love. May your Holy Spirit guide us to walk together in your ways, strengthen our faith, and bring healing where there is brokenness. Let your namesake shine through as we embrace your grace and share it with others.
In the name of the risen Christ Jesus, I pray. Amen

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDvvTHBCRes&list=RDhDvvTHBCRes&start_radio=1

'I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART'

