

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
ALBEMARLE, NORTH CAROLINA  
ASH WEDNESDAY  
MARCH 2, 2022  
6:00 P.M.



*Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent, a season of renewal.  
A time in which Christians consider the meaning of their baptism into Christ and his church.*

*During this service, we are invited to receive  
the imposition of ashes in the sign of the cross upon our foreheads.*

*The mark of the cross is accompanied by some sobering words,  
"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."  
These words remind us that our entire existence is animated  
by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## GATHERING

MUSIC FOR PREPARATION

*O God, You Search Me*

Bernadette Farrell

O God, you search me and you know me. All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.  
When I walk or lie down you are before me: Ever the maker and keeper of my days.

You know my resting and my rising. You discern my purpose from afar,  
And with love everlasting you besiege me: In ev'ry moment of life or death, you are.

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord, you have known its meaning through and through  
You are with me beyond my understanding: God of my present, my past and future, too.

Although your Spirit is upon me, still I search for shelter from your light.  
There is nowhere on earth I can escape you: Even the darkness is radiant in your sight.

For you created me and shaped me, gave me life within my mother's womb.  
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you: Safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

OPENING SENTENCES

*John 3:17; Psalm 46:1-3*

God sent Christ into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him

**God's love endures forever.**

God is our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though the waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

**God's love endures forever.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

**Almighty God, you despise nothing you have made and you forgive the sins of all who trust in you. Create in us new and contrite hearts, that truly repenting of our sins, and acknowledging our brokenness, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

\*HYMN 442

*Just as I Am, without One Plea*

Woodworth

## WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Merciful God, your word is our way of truth and life. Create in us hearts that are clean and put your Holy Spirit within us, so that we may receive your grace and declare your praise forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

*Psalm 51*

Pew Bible, page 492

MEDITATION

*Unmasked*

Reverend Cathy S. George

## INVITATION TO OBSERVE A HOLY LENT

Beloved people of God: every year at the time of the Christian Passover, we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life in the paschal mystery. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of the ashes. This ancient sign speaks to the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marks the penitence of this community. I invite you, therefore, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of love, and by meditating on God's word. Now let us bow before God, our creator and redeemer, and confess our sin.

HYMN 421

*Have Mercy, God, Upon My Life*  
(Psalm 51)

Irish

## LITANY OF PENITENCE

Holy and merciful God, we confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart, mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

We have not listened to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness. For the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

For our self-indulgent appetites and ways and our exploitation of other people,

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

For our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

For our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

For our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrongs we have done; for our neglect of human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

For our waste and pollution of your creation and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Restore us, O God of our salvation, and show us your steadfast love.

**Turn to us in your mercy and redeem us.**

## IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and penitence, for it is only by your gracious gift we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

*Those who wish may come forward and receive the ashes in the sign of the cross on your forehead.*

*After all have received ashes the service continues with the following:*

**KYRIE ELIESON**

Let us come before God in faith, confessing to God and to one another our manifold sin and asking for God's healing grace to be upon us. ... (brief silence). Lord, have mercy upon us.

**Christ, have mercy upon us.**

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

**That we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of our Savior,

**Bring us with all your saints to the joy of Christ's resurrection.**

\*HYMN 166

*Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days*

St. Flavian

\*BENEDICTION

*Please depart in silence*

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Worshippers who do not wish to receive the imposition of ashes may remain seated and use this time for silent prayer and meditation.

Childcare is provided downstairs in the nursery.