



ASH
WEDNESDAY

2025

***Welcome to a joint Ash Wednesday service
of Church of the Savior
and Second Presbyterian.***

Entering into the rhythm of the Lenten season, let us open our hearts to a meditative and reflective style of worship.

The mood of this service is penitence and reflection upon the quality of one's faith and life; its goal is to enlist participation in the Lenten discipline which, by its focus upon the mystery of our redemption, should strengthen us by bringing us again and anew to the gift of our baptism. We will use music with simple melodies, periods of silence, and scripture. This service of meditation finds its true meaning in the active participation of all assembled and is meant to focus our attention on quieting our souls and being in the presence of God.

Ashes are prepared for this service. Ashes are an extraordinarily rich symbol rooted in ancient customs and practices. Ashes, in a Jewish and Christian context, suggest judgment, God's condemnation of sin, frailty, and our total dependence upon God for life, humility, and repentance. Ashes were once used as a cleansing agent in the absence of soap, so they also suggest cleansing and renewal. On Ash Wednesday the ashes have also been understood as a substitute for water as a sign of baptism.

The Ash Wednesday liturgy marks the beginning of the Lenten discipline, which climaxes in the absolution and peace of the Maundy Thursday liturgy. *Lent* is from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning *springtime* and so is to be understood as the holy springtime of the soul – a time for preparation, planting, and growth.

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 5, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

Please observe a time of silence and meditation as we prepare to worship the Lord.

CHORAL INTROIT

WELCOME

✠CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

One: Lent calls us to a journey of anticipation. During Lent we anticipate Jesus' final trip to Jerusalem.

All: Lent calls us to a journey from life to death and back to life.

One: Rather than calling us to give up something, Lent calls us to take something upon ourselves – participation in the mystery of God.

All: Lent calls us to penitence, accountability, and preparation – both corporately and individually.

One: Lent calls us to remember our baptismal calling to be a sign to the world of the Kingdom of God.

All: Lent calls us to face the darkness without holding a flashlight.

✠OPENING PRAYER

✠PLEASE STAND IN BODY OR IN SPIRIT, AS YOU ARE ABLE

Lord, who throughout these forty days for us did fast and pray
Teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay

As you with Satan did contend and did the victory win
O give us strength to persevere, in you to conquer sin

And through these days of penitence, and through this Passiontide
Yes, evermore, in life and death, O Lord, with us abide

Abide with us, till when this life of suffering shall be past
An Easter of unending joy may we attain at last



PROCLAIMING THE WORD

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

SILENT MEDITATION

HEBREW BIBLE READING

Isaiah 58:1-12

Shout out; do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they want God on their side. “Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers. You fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly, your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

SILENT MEDITATION

HOMILY

Sarah Morgan



RESPONDING TO THE WORD

INVITATION TO OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 31:9-16

Refrain

O Lord, You are my God, I trust in You.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in distress
Tears have wasted my eyes, my throat, and my heart
For my life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighs
Affliction has broken down my strength and my bones waste away

Refrain

In the face of all my foes I am a reproach
An object of scorn to my neighbors and of fear to my friends
Those who see me in the street run far away from me
I am like the dead, forgotten by all, like a thing thrown away

Refrain

I have heard the slander of the crowd, fear is all around me
As they plot together against me, as they plan to take my life
But as for me, I trust in You, Lord, I say:

You are my God

My life is in your hands

Deliver me from the hands of those who hate me

Let your face shine upon your servant

Save me in Your love

Refrain

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Most 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 and mind and strength.

We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We have not forgiven others as we, ourselves, have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us.

We have not been true to the mind of Christ.

We have not been true to Christ's call for unity.

We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness.

The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

we confess to you, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways,

and our exploitation of other people,

we confess to you, Lord.

Our willful ignorance to the unjust structures in society,

and our envy of those with more resources than us,

we confess to you, Lord.

Our love of worldly goods and comforts,

and our dishonesty in daily life and work.

we confess to you, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship,

and our failure to nourish the faith that is in us,

we confess to you, Lord.

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done.
For our blindness to human need and suffering,
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

accept our repentance, Lord.

For false judgments and uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors,
for prejudice and contempt towards those who are different from us,
accept our repentance, Lord.

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

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.
**Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great
and your steadfast love abounds. Amen.**

♠HYMN

O Lord, How We Have Wandered

PASSION CHORALE

**O Lord, how we have wandered and hidden from your face
In foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace
But now, in exile dwelling, we rise with fear and shame
As, distant but compelling, we hear you call our name**

**And now at length discerning the evil that we do
Behold us, Lord, returning with hope and trust to you
In haste you come to meet us and home rejoicing bring
In gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring**

**O Lord of all the living, both banished and restored
Compassionate, forgiving and ever-caring Lord
Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace**

THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES

ANTHEM

Lead Me Lord

arr. John Leavitt

Lead me, Lord, lead me in your righteousness
Make your way plain before my face
For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord, only
That makes me to dwell in safety

✠ IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those wishing to receive ashes are invited to come forward down the center aisle one pew at a time. If you are unable to come forward for the Imposition of Ashes, remain in your seat and a pastor will come to you where you are.

LITANY OF ASSURANCE

based on Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Even now, says the Lord, return to me.

Even now, God says, return to me.

Let the sirens in the streets rage; let the trumpet from the church house blow. Let those consumed with darkness, gloomy from bad fortunes know that:

Even now, God says, return to me.

Let the abused and the abusing hear, the defiant and the disobedient revere. Let the sinner and the scornful draw near.

Even now, God says, return to me.

Return from your ignorance, return from your injustice. Return from your apathy, return from your agony.

Even now, God says, return to me.

Return from your selfishness, return from your greed. Return from your neglect and your failures, return out of your need.

Even now, God says, return to me.

Return to me with a clean heart. Return to me with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

Return to me, God says, for I am gracious and merciful; I am slow to anger and full of steadfast love. Return to me, God says, for I am your God.

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
that we may show forth your glory in the world.
Bring us, with all your saints, to the joy of resurrection
Through the cross and Passion of your Son, our Lord,
Who taught us to pray...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Loving God in heaven,
your name is hallowed,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

✠HYMN

What Wondrous Love Is This?

#215

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down
When I was sinking down, sinking down
When I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul!

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing
To God and to the Lamb, who is the great I AM
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing
While millions join the theme, I will sing

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be
And through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on
And through eternity I'll sing on

✠ **BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

✠ **POSTLUDE**

SERVING IN WORSHIP THIS EVENING

Tonya Barnette – Associate Pastor, Church of the Savior
Sarah Morgan – Pastor, 2nd Presbyterian
Tim Reynolds – Pastor, 2nd Presbyterian
Matt Mimbs – Director of Music & Arts
Second Presbyterian Chancel Choir

Second Presbyterian Church

Organized 1818

A congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

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