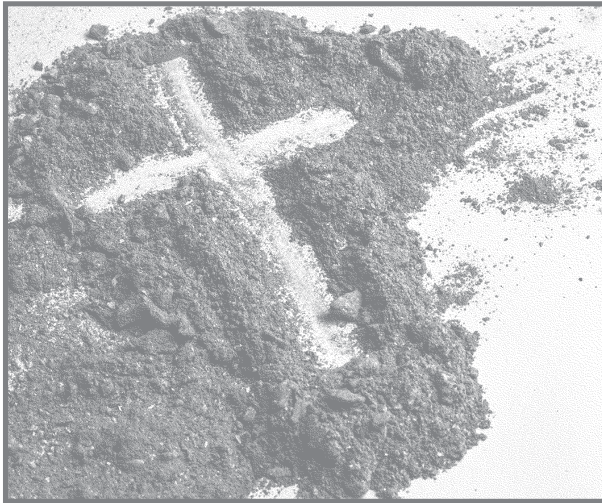


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

617 North Elm Street, Greensboro, North Carolina • fpcgreensboro.org



Ash Wednesday signifies a time to turn around, to change direction, to repent. The first day of Lent reminds us that unless we are willing to die to our old selves, we cannot be raised to new life with Christ.

Ashes on our forehead is a sign that our Lenten journey is underway. We will follow Jesus into the wilderness, resist temptation, fast and are "on our way" to Jerusalem and the cross. We are changing directions from self-serving toward the self-giving way of the cross.

FEBRUARY 17, 2020
A Service of Worship on Ash Wednesday
5:30 p.m.

PRELUDE: Choral Louis Vierne (1870-1937)
John Alexander, organ

WELCOME Jill Duffield

CALL TO WORSHIP Keith Dove

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

People: **God's love endures forever.**

Leader: 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.

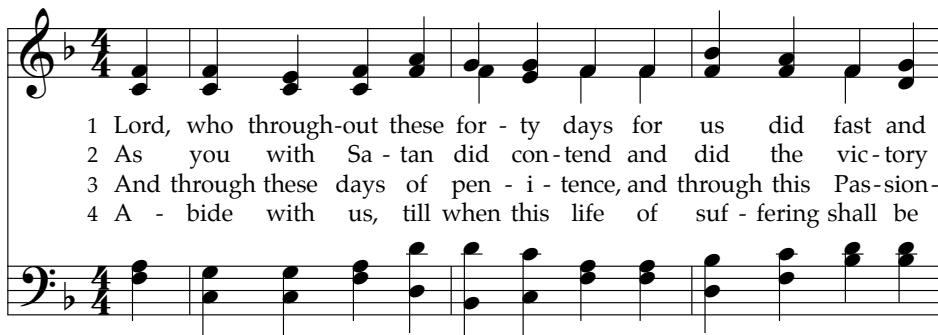
People: **God's love endures forever.**

– John 3:17; Ps. 46:1-3

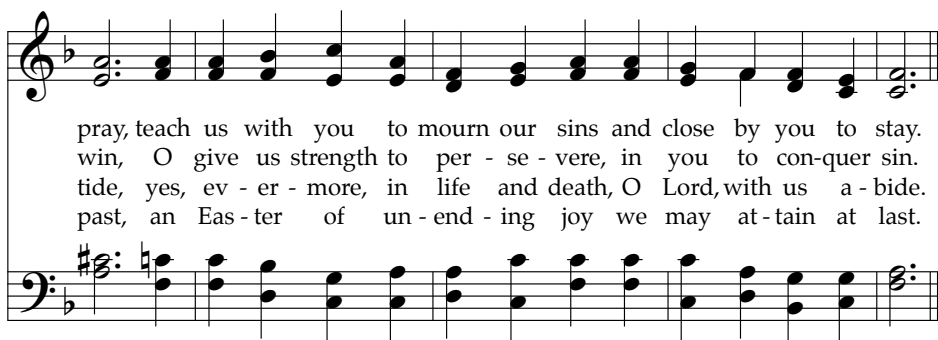
PRAYER OF THE DAY

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: No. 166 – Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days ST. FLAVIAN



1 Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and
2 As you with Sa - tan did con - tend and did the vic - tory
3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas - sion -
4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be



pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.
win, O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con - quer sin.
tide, yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.
past, an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at - tain at last.

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.

FIRST READING: *Joel 2:1-2, 12-17*

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, “Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM: Pilgrims’ Hymn Stephen Paulus (1949-2014)

Chancel Choir Ensemble

Even before we call on Your name
To ask You, O God,
When we seek for the words to glorify You,
You hear our prayer;
Unceasing love, O unceasing love,
Surpassing all we know.
 Glory to the Father,
 And to the Son,
 And to the Holy Spirit.
Even with darkness sealing us in,
We breathe Your name,
And through all the days that follow so fast,
We trust in You;
Endless Your grace, O endless Your grace,
Beyond all mortal dream.
 Both now and forever,
 And unto ages and ages, Amen.

– *Michael Dennis Browne*

“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.”

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

CHANT OF PSALM 51:1-18

Chancel Choir Ensemble

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness:
according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.
Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou
mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.
Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.
Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt
make me to know wisdom.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me,
and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken
may rejoice.
Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.
Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.
Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation:
and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it:
thou delightest not in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart,
O God, thou wilt not despise.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being, whose face is hidden from us by our sins, and whose mercy we forget in the blindness of our hearts: Cleanse us from all our offenses, and deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires, that with reverent and humble hearts we may draw near to you, confessing our faults, confiding in your grace, and finding in you our refuge and strength; through Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.

– from the Book of Common Worship

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Worshippers are invited to impose ashes on the forehead or the hand as a sign and symbol of our repentance.

CLOSING HYMN: No. 708 – We Give Thee but Thine Own SCHUMANN

1 We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be;
2 May we thy boun-ties thus as stew-ards true re - ceive,
3 The cap-tive to re - lease, to God the lost to bring,
4 And we be - lieve thy word, though dim our faith may be;

all that we have is thine a - lone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.
and glad - ly, as thou bless - est us, to thee our first - fruits give.
to teach the way of life and peace: it is a Christ - like thing.
what - e'er we do for thine, O Lord, we do it un - to thee.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

THIS EVENING'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Jill Duffield, Senior Pastor
Keith Dove, Sid & Cathy Batts Pastoral Resident
John Alexander, Director of Music and Principal Organist
Robert Wells, Director of Chancel Choir
Chancel Choir Ensemble

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