

ASH
WEDNESDAY



**First Presbyterian
Church**

February 22, 2012

Ash Wednesday Service

7:00 p.m.

February 22, 2012

Unison readings and responses are printed in **bold** type.

All may enter in quietness.

Prelude

+Call to Worship

Listen, listen. It is time. Blow the trumpet in Zion and gather the people. This is the time of repentance. For God says, "Return to me with all your heart."

We return to God in true repentance. We rend our hearts and not our garments. We seek God's amazing forgiveness.

We believe that God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Let us gather and sanctify all of this congregation – young and old, men and women, joyful and sorrow-filled. Let us worship God.

+Hymn 81

"Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days"

St. Flavian

Prayer

O Christ, when words do not come, when we are laid low by sorrow or anxiety, when strength wanes and power ebbs, and the spirit in us cries out for its Maker,

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy.

When temptation comes, when the lure of the false takes hold, when resistance is down and yielding is easiest,

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy.

When ours is to serve, but we rebel, and ours is to wait, but we run ahead, when ours is to trust, but we mistrust, and ours is to learn, but we remain ignorant,

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy.

When we have given offense and not worked to heal the hurt we have caused, when we have been offended and have not given up the hurt, but have nursed it into contempt,

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy.

O Christ, this night is a time of reflection on our mortality. It is a time of our remembering our frailties. Have mercy upon us, forgive us of all the many ways that we fail you, and grant us Your peace.

Scripture Readings
This is the Word of God.
Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 6: 1-9 (pg 635 O.T)

Anthem "God so loved the World" Chilcot

Second Scripture Reading 1 John 1: 5-10 (pg 238 N.T.)

Meditation "Undone and Done . . . Undone" Rev. Lanny Lawler

The Imposition of Ashes

You are invited to come down the center aisle to receive the sign of the ashes. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marks the need of the community for God's grace. Please return to your seat via a side aisle.

Hymn 85 "What Wondrous Love Is This" Wondrous Love
(We will sing this hymn together as people process forward to receive their ashes allowing the choir to come first)

Prayer (unison)

God of mercy, slow to anger, wise to judge, mighty to deliver, we are grateful for the grace that brings us back to You. We praise You for those moments when faith is strengthened by Scripture, when comfort far surpasses judgment, when knowledge becomes wisdom, when Jesus is closer than any friend. In the days to come may we carry the message of Your love to those whose search for grace continues. Amen.

+Hymn 87 "The Glory of These Forty Days" Erhalt Uns, Herr

+Passing the Peace

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

(Please depart in silence)

+ + + + +

Service Participants:

North Christian Church: Lanny C. Lawler, Senior Minister; David C. Sims, Director of Music; Chancel Choir

First Presbyterian Church: Peggy Casteel, Associate Pastor; Colin Andrews, Organist; Adult Choir

Lent is the season of preparation for the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. A time of reflection and penitence, the 40 days of Lent, plus the 6 Sundays immediately preceding Easter, symbolize the time Jesus spent fasting and praying in the wilderness before his temptation. The word Lent comes from the Old German word meaning "lengthening". The days are growing longer, and the lengthening days of Spring give the season of Lent its name.

Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, used to be called "Dei cineram", the day of burning. Palms from the previous year were burned as the season of remembrance and repentance begins. Today, many Christians around the world will go forward to receive on their foreheads a cross of ashes made from burned palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration. With the imposition of these ashes they will be reminded who they are and to whom they belong. In the service this evening you will have the opportunity to come forward in that same way. We hope that you will.

Lent is not a time to make ourselves better so that we deserve God's love. We cannot deserve it. That is why we call it grace. Lent is a time to open ourselves up to the wonderful love which God has already shown us in Christ Jesus. We pray that this service will help you open up to that love in a fresh way.

We strive toward the use of inclusive language in our church as it pertains to people and to God.

--adopted by the Session, 4/16/97



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