



INDEPENDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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ASH WEDNESDAY

February 17, 2021



C.J. Briggs, Music Director

Rev. David B. Wigger, Pastor

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession. Acknowledging that we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory, we repent and return to our loving creator. Acutely aware of our failure and frailty, we express our utter reliance on God's saving grace.

-PCUSA Book of Common Worship

Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance, sorrow, and sacrifice. Ashes for this service were made from the palm branches of the previous year.

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, lead us through
this time in need of healing.

GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP (*Joel 2:1-2, 12-14*)

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 host 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 God is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

HYMN

“Have Mercy, God, Upon My Life”

Words by David Gambrell

GTG #421

IRISH

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

(NRSV)

Hear what the Holy Spirit is telling God's people.

Thanks be to God.

INVITATION TO OBSERVE A HOLY LENT

RESPONSE

“Shepherd Me, O God”

GTG #473

by Marty Haugen

PSALM 51 (RESPONSIVE READING)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

**Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

For I know my offenses,
and my sin is ever before me.

**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgement.**

Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my mother's womb.

**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

**Let me hear joy and gladness;
that the broken body may rejoice.**

Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my wickedness.

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**

Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Spirit from me.

**Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

Let me teach your ways to offenders,
and sinners shall be restored to you.

**Rescue me from pain, O God, of my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall declare your praise.

**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.
You are not pleased with burnt offerings.**

***ALL: The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.***

LITANY OF PENITENCE

After each confession, the congregation may respond:
Holy and almighty God, **have mercy on us.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those who so desire may come forward to receive an imposition of ashes as a sign of penitence not only for our individual sin, but also in recognition of our complicity in the sin of the world. Due to COVID, each individual will place ashes, in the sign of the cross, on their own forehead.

HYMN

“When We Must Bear Persistent Pain”

Words by Ruth Duck

GTG #807

PROSPECT

BLESSING AND CHARGE

All are invited to quietly exit.

Pieces of today’s liturgy are from the *Book of Common Worship*, PC(USA); and *Presbyterian Outlook*, Roger Gench. Greeting prayer by Rebecca Gresham-Kesner.