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Ash Wednesday
February 22, 2023



Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the 40 day season of Lent. Worship on this day emphasizes a dual encounter: we confront our own mortality and confess our sins before God within the community of faith. We will focus on the dual themes of sin and death in the light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. While the use of ashes as a sign of mortality and penance may be new to some, it has a significant history in both Jewish and Christian worship. The imposition of ashes can be a powerful way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023 7:00 PM

PRELUDE

WORDS OF GRACE, GREETING AND INSTRUCTION

Rev. Chris Black

✠ CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We come to worship God as the Lenten season begins, aware of our frailty and our failings.

P: We come seeking God's mercy, acknowledging our mortality.

L: Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord!

P: God has blessed us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

L: Having received the waters of baptism, we are marked now with ashes.

P: The treasures of this earth do not last; our treasure is in heaven, our heart's true home.

✠ OPENING PRAYER

O God, maker of everything and judge of all that you have made, from the dust of the earth you formed us and from the dust of death you would raise us up. By the redemptive power of the cross, create in us clean hearts and put within us a new spirit, that we may repent of our sins and lead lives worthy of your calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

✠ HYMN

"Sunday's Palms are Wednesday's Ashes"

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RESPONSIVE PSALM

Psalms 51: 1-17

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

ANTHEM

"Embrace the Cross"

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

HOMILY

Rev. Chris Black

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

ABSOLUTION

May the almighty and merciful God, who desires not the death of a sinner but that we turn from wickedness and live, accept our repentance, forgive our sins, and restore us by the Holy Spirit to newness of life. Amen.

✠ HYMN:

"O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee"

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BENEDICTION

✠ Congregation standing as able