

Ash Wednesday



February 26, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Wilmington, Delaware

Preparation for Worship

*God our Refuge,
You are our rock, our strength, and our salvation.
As we enter this season of Lent, help us seek you in the stillness,
to create space and time in which we dwell with you alone.
Help us to grow in our faith and in our confidence of your love and grace,
that – through the comfort of the Holy Spirit –
we shall not be shaken. Amen.*

Adapted from a prayer by the Rev. Karen Wright

Choral Call to Worship

“Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”

Opening Sentences

You who are weary and worn,
who have traded joy for sorrow,
who feel you have lost your way –

Come home.

You who are burdened and broken,
who are pained by wrongs committed,
who seek healing and wholeness –

Come home.

You who are disenchanted and despairing,
who feel far from the heart of God,
who hunger and thirst for good news –

Come home.

Softly, tenderly Jesus beckons us home.

We are here.

Let us worship the Lord.

**Hymn #166*

“Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days”

At the asterisk (), please stand as you are able.*

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Forgive us, O God, according to your faithful love!

**For we have sinned against you,
choosing comfort over compassion,
and selfish gain over self-giving service.**

Forgive us, O God, for we tear away at your vision of *Shalom*.

**You yearn for creation to flourish,
but we privilege our own security over the welfare of all.
Rather than breaking the yoke,
we are complicit in systems that oppress.
Rather than sharing our abundance,
we satisfy our own hearts and appetites.**

Forgive us, O God, and transform our lives.

**Draw near to us that we might draw near to you —
not with superficial repentance,
but with a deep desire to walk in your ways.**

Silent Prayer

Choral Response “Change My Heart, O God”

Assurance of God’s Forgiveness

Response #654 “In the Lord I’ll Be Ever Thankful”

**In the Lord I’ll be ever thankful;
in the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God; do not be afraid.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.
Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.**

Scripture

Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalms 51 (Hymn #423)

“Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God”

Scripture

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Litany of Ashes

Our ancestors in the faith
used ashes as a sign of repentance –
a symbol of the uncertainty
and fragility of human life.

**Like them,
we have tasted the ashes of hopelessness;
we have walked through the ashes of loss and pain;
we have stood knee-deep
in the ashes of our brokenness.**

Source of Our Being –
out of the dust of creation
you have formed us and given us life.

**May these ashes not only be a sign
of our repentance and death,
but reminders that,
by your gift of grace in Jesus Christ,
we are granted life forever with you. Amen.**

Imposition of Ashes

*Those who wish to receive the imposition of ashes should come forward
by the center aisle and return by the side aisle. Please indicate to the pastor
if you wish to receive the ashes on your hand rather than your forehead.*

Prayer

Everlasting God, we are marked with ashes –
symbols of repentant hearts and contrite spirits.
We long to be transformed,
to be made new,
to learn the freedom of serving no Lord but you.
Help us heed your call,
and walk with Christ into the wilderness.
Throughout this journey,
may we be so transformed by your power and glory
that we seek above all else
to be worthy citizens of your new world of justice and peace.
Amen.

**Song #543* “God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me”

**Sending*

The cross,
 We shall take it;
The pain,
 We shall bear it;
The joy
 We shall share it;
The gospel,
 We shall live it;
The love,
 We shall give it;
The light,
 we shall cherish it;
The darkness,
 God shall perish it. Amen!

*All are invited to join us for a soup supper, including vegetarian options,
following worship in Community Hall.*

The Litany of Ashes is adapted from a prayer by the Rev. Thom Shuman.
The prayer following the Imposition of Ashes is adapted from a prayer by Christine Sine.

Worship Leaders:

The Reverend Dr. Gregory Knox Jones
The Reverend Sudie Niesen Thompson
Sharon Babcock, Interim Director of Music

Westminster Choristers:

Sharon Babcock, Olivia Forney,
Jason Berger, Brenton Mattox
Rudolph Lucente, Guest Organist

O God,
Help us to use this season of Lent
to examine our attachments,
and to sense where you invite us
to live more simply and deeply.

Shine the light of your love
into the private corners of our lives
where we have acquired so much clutter
that it has begun to restrict our freedom.

Grant us the strength to free ourselves
from appetites and needs that drive us
into taking, having and wanting
more than we need or have time for.

Teach us that in letting go
we become free rather than deprived,
generous rather than covetous,
and spacious rather than restricted.

We offer you our Lenten observance,
and today we place our feet
on the road to Easter
and walk the way that you have walked before us.
Amen.

By Ann Siddall