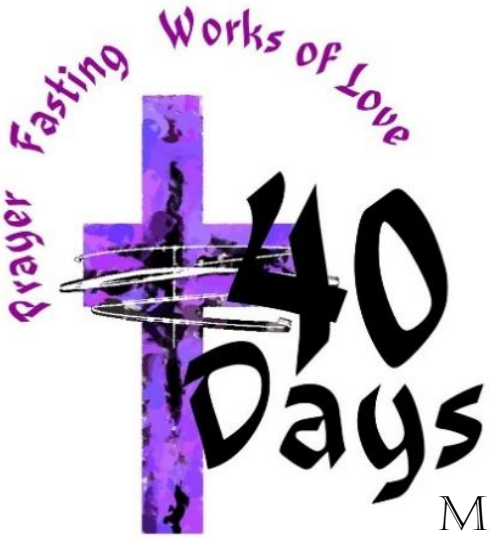


MARKED BY ASHES

Ruler of the Night, Guarantor of the day…
This day — a gift from you.
This day — like none other you have ever given, or we have ever received.
This Wednesday dazzles us with gift and newness and possibility.
This Wednesday burdens us with the tasks of the day, for we are already halfway home
halfway back to committees and memos,
halfway back to calls and appointments,
halfway on to next Sunday,
halfway back, half frazzled, half expectant,
half turned toward you, half rather not.
This Wednesday is a long way from Ash Wednesday,
but all our Wednesdays are marked by ashes —
we begin this day with that taste of ash in our mouth:
of failed hope and broken promises,
of forgotten children and frightened women,
we ourselves are ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
we can taste our mortality as we roll the ash around on our tongues.
We are able to ponder our ashness with
some confidence, only because our every Wednesday of ashes
anticipates your Easter victory over that dry, flaky taste of death.
On this Wednesday, we submit our ashen way to you —
you Easter parade of newness.
Before the sun sets, take our Wednesday and Easter us,
Easter us to joy and energy and courage and freedom;
Easter us that we may be fearless for your truth.
Come here and Easter our Wednesday with
mercy and justice and peace and generosity.
We pray as we wait for the Risen One who comes soon.

Walter Bruggemann, (b. 1933)

Westminster Church of Peoria

A congregation of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
1420 West Moss Avenue, Peoria, Illinois 61606

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1420 West Moss Avenue
Peoria, IL 61606

ASH WEDNESDAY

2 March 2025

Seven O'clock

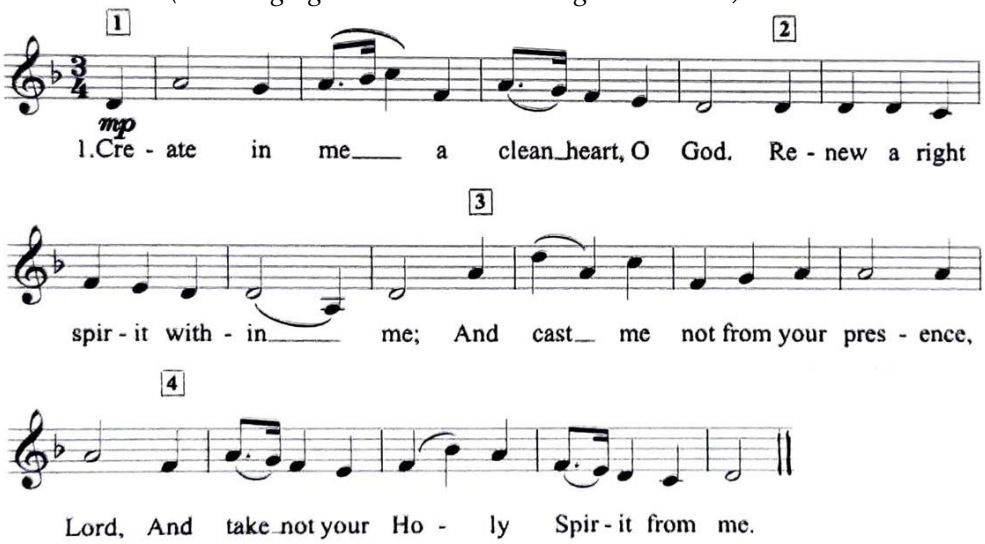
ALMIGHTY GOD, you despise nothing you have made and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts, that truly repenting of our sins, and acknowledging our brokenness we may obtain from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

From the Book of Common Worship, Presbyterian Church (USA)

GATHERING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE RISEN CHRIST

THE PREPARATION **Savior, When in Dust to You (Aberystwyth)** *Gerald Near*
Variations on St. Flavian *Flor Peeters*

A Lenten Introit **Create in me a Clean Heart**
(The congregation is invited to sing the 2nd time)



WELCOME **Rev. Tim Mitchell**

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

ONE: *If you have days when you feel a little bit lost and a little bit found,*
ALL: then you are in the right place.
ONE: *If you have days when you are desperate for the rest and eager to grow,*
ALL: then you are in the right place.
ONE: *If you have days when your prayers could be both shouts and silence,*
ALL: then you are in the right place.
ONE: *God meets us here, in the messy middle of our lives.*
ALL: So may we bring our whole selves into this service and into this season.
ONE: *With God's help, may it be so.*
ALL: Let us worship our all-loving God.

***HYMN 81** **Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days** *St. Flavian*

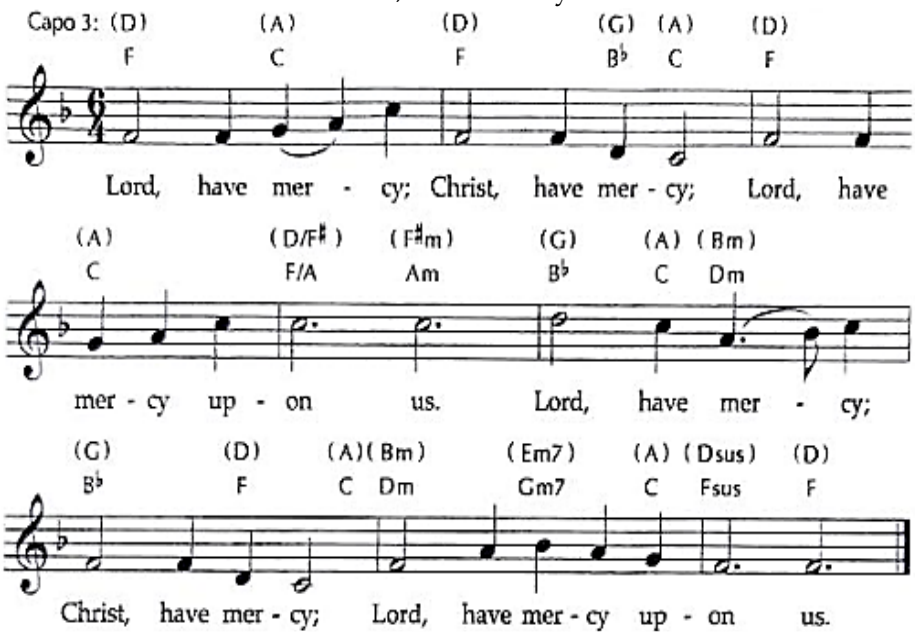
CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (RESPONSIVE)

ONE: Jesus said, "Follow me,"
ALL: And I said, *let me get ready.*
ONE: Jesus said "Follow me,"
ALL: And I said, *just one minute!*
ONE: Jesus said, "Follow me,"
ALL: And I said, *I'll be there soon!*
ONE: The invitation is simple, but the work is hard.
ALL: Jesus, forgive my delay. I want to follow you.
Turn my intentions into actions.
Show me the way. Amen.

TIME FOR SILENCE AND PERSONAL CONFESSION

KYRIE Lord, Have Mercy



ASSURANCE OF PARDON

HEARING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 58:1-12

The Word of the Lord…. **Thanks be to God.**

***PSALM 51 - Hymn 195** **Have Mercy on Us, Living Lord** *Ptomey*

EPISTLE: 2 Corinthians 5:20b, 6:2

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Word of the Lord…. **Thanks be to God.**

MEDITATION

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *(UNISON)*

We believe in Jesus Christ,
who said to ordinary people, "Follow me," and with his love, changed the world.
We believe in the Holy Spirit
who tethers us to all of creation,
nudging us toward deeper and more intentional faith. And we believe in the Creator
who brings the sun over the horizon each morning, allowing every day to be a new beginning.
So, with this new day,
with Jesus' invitation ringing in our ears, and the Holy Spirit's tethering love,
we realign our hopes with our words,
our dreams with our prayers, our intentions with our actions.
Jesus, we believe. Guide our feet. Amen.

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

May the peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

THE GIFT OF MUSIC A Lenten Walk *American Spiritual/Hal Hopson*

Jesus walked this lonesome valley, he had to walk it by himself.
Oh, nobody else could walk it for him, he had to walk it by himself.
We must walk this lonesome valley, we have to walk it by ourselves.
Oh, nobody else can walk it for us, we have to walk it ourselves.

†

SEALING THE WORD

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

CARRYING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

HYMN *(see insert)* Dust and Ashes Touch Our Face
(The congregation is invited to sing the Refrain)

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

The Congregation may leave in silence.

Leading in worship today:

The Rev. Tim Mitchell
Dr. Polly Brecht, *Organist-Choirmaster*
Lara Reem, *soprano* · **Joseph Strauss,** *tenor*
Kate Kortemeier, *alto* · **J. Douglas McQueen,** *tenor*
David Kortemeier, *bass*

Open Mind Open Hands Open Heart

Westminster Presbyterian Church · 1420 W. Moss Ave., Peoria, IL 61606

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