



***First Presbyterian Church - Las Cruces, New Mexico***

**Ash Wednesday Service**

**March 2, 2022 – 6:00 PM**

PRELUDE / GATHERING MUSIC

Medley of Lenten Hymns

WELCOME, GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEDITATION IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Come ye disconsolate, where ere ye languish, Come to the mercy seat,  
fervently kneel. Here bring your wounded hearts, Here tell your anguish.

Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

Joy of the desolate, light of the straying. Hope of the penitent, faceless and  
pure! Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying, "Earth has no sorrow that  
heaven cannot cure." (Thomas Moore, Sacred Songs, 1816.)

CHORAL INTROIT

"Call to Lent"

Jerome Williams Diana

Gutierrez and Beth Thomas

PRAYER OF ADORATION

Rosalyn Stolee

Loving God, how great and wonderful you are! You call us to live in  
faithfulness and friendship with you, which leads us to be your compassionate  
hands and feet that bring your healing grace to our troubled and hurting  
world. Gracious and loving God, help us to come before you with humble and  
open hearts, and to be willing to see the truth about ourselves. You created  
us, each one of us uniquely wonderful, according to your purpose. We have  
not lived up to that gift and blessing. Help us trust you to cleanse, change,  
and redirect our lives. Tonight we begin our Lenten journey, a season to  
travel with Jesus along the path which led him to the cross. Give us courage  
and strength and confidence in your constant love. Bless us with your grace

and abiding purpose that we will take up our cross and follow in faithfulness.  
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

#### SALT AND LIGHT COMBINED CHOIRS

“Forty Days and Nights”  
Sarah Loman and Amon Taylor, Chimes

Michael Bedford

#### SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 58:1-12 (NRSV)

Lon Anderson

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

\*CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

#223 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

HAMBURG

LITANY OF CONFESSION AND GRACE

(Psalm 51)

Sarah Loman

Leader: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion, blot out my offenses. Wash me through and through from my wickedness

**People: and cleanse me from my sin.**

Leader: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you only have I sinned

**People: and done what is evil in your sight.**

Leader: And so you are justified when you speak, and upright in your judgment. Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be clean indeed. Hide your face from my sins

**People: and blot out all my iniquities.**

Leader: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence

**People: and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

Leader: Give me the joy of your saving help again, and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. Deliver me from death, O God, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

**People: Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN "Jesus Loves Me"

*Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so;  
Little ones to Him belong; they are weak, but He is strong.*

**Refrain:** Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

*Jesus loves me! He who died heaven's gate to open wide;  
He will wash away my sin, let his little child come in.*

**Refrain:**

*Jesus, take this heart of mine, Make it pure and wholly thine;  
On the cross you died for me, I will try to live for Thee.*

**Refrain:**

*When the nights are dark and long, In my heart He puts a song.  
Telling me in words so clear, "Have no fear, for I am near."*

**Refrain:**

*Jesus loves me, this I know, though my hair is white as snow.  
Though my sight is growing dim, Still He bids me trust in him.*

**Refrain:**

#### SCRIPTURE READING

PSALM 90 (*The Message*)

Greg Sherman

God, it seems you've been our home forever; long before the mountains were born, long before you brought earth itself to birth, from "once upon a time" to "kingdom come"—you are God. So don't return us to mud, saying, "Back to where you came from!" Patience! You've got all the time in the world—whether a thousand years or a day, it's all the same to you. Are we no more to you than a wispy dream, no more than a blade of grass That springs up gloriously with the rising sun and is cut down without a second thought? Your anger is far and away too much for us; we're at the end of our rope.

We live for seventy years or so (with luck we might make it to eighty), And what do we have to show for it? Trouble. Toil and trouble and a marker in the graveyard. Who can make sense of such rage, such anger against the very ones who fear you?

Oh! Teach us to live well! Teach us to live wisely and well! Come back, God—how long do we have to wait?— and treat your servants with kindness. Surprise us with love at daybreak; then we'll skip and dance all the day long.

Make up for the bad times with some good times; we've seen enough evil to last a lifetime. Let your servants see what you're best at— the ways you rule and bless your children. And let the loveliness of our Lord, our God, rest on us, confirming the work that we do. Oh, yes. Affirm the work that we do!

HYMN

#649 "Amazing Grace"

AMAZING GRACE

#### SCRIPTURE READING

MATTHEW 6:1-8 (NRSV)

Patricia Adu-Mensah

"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is

doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

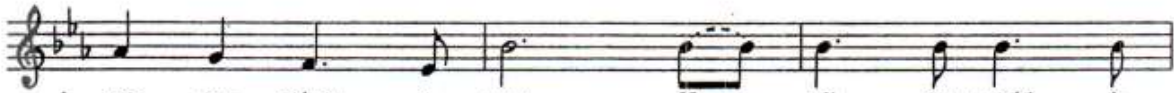
"Ashes"



1. We rise a - gain from ash - es, \_\_\_ from the good we've failed to  
 2. We of - fer you our fail - ures, \_\_\_ we \_\_\_ of - fer you at -  
 3. Then rise a - gain from ash - es, \_\_\_ let \_\_\_ heal - ing come to  
 4. † Thanks be to the Fa - ther, \_\_\_ who \_\_\_ made us like him -



1. do. We rise a - gain from ash - es, \_\_\_ to cre -  
 2. tempts, the gifts not ful - ly giv - en, \_\_\_ the \_\_\_  
 3. pain, though spring has turned to win - ter, \_\_\_ and \_\_\_  
 4. self. † Thanks be to the Son, \_\_\_ who \_\_\_



1. ate our - selves a - new. If \_\_\_ all our world is  
 2. dreams not ful - ly dreamt. Give our stum - bl - ings di -  
 3. sun - shine turned to rain. The \_\_\_ rain we'll use for  
 4. saved us by his death. † Thanks be to the



1. ash - es, then \_\_\_ must our lives be true, an \_\_\_ of - fer - ing of  
 2. rec - tion, give our vi - sions wid - er view, an \_\_\_ of - fer - ing of  
 3. grow - ing, and cre - ate the world a - new from an of - fer - ing of  
 4. Spir - it who cre - ates the world a - new from an of - fer - ing of



1-4. ash - es, \_\_\_ an of - fer - ing to you. you. \_\_\_

PASTORAL MEDITATION

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

BENEDICTION

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

#227 "Jesus, Remember Me"

REMEMBER ME

POSTLUDE

Hymn Tune Improvisation

Howard A. Smolleck

### ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent. Lent is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline.

Ash Wednesday emphasizes two themes: our brokenness before God and our human mortality. Our worship service focuses on both themes, helping us to realize that both have been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

During our Ash Wednesday worship, a pastor will lightly rub the sign of the cross with ashes onto the foreheads of worshipers. The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship. Historically, ashes signified purification and sorrow for sins.

It is traditional to save the palm branches from a previous Palm Sunday service to burn to produce ashes for this service. The ash cross on the forehead is an outward sign of our sorrow and repentance for sins.

### WHY WE RECEIVE ASHES

Ashes have been used in Christian churches to mark the beginning of Lent since at least the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, and ashes are mentioned in Scripture as a symbol of purification and repentance. From the story of Jonah, following the example of the Ninevites, who did penance in "sackcloth and ashes", as a sign, we put ashes on our foreheads reminding us to humble our hearts, to remind us of our mortality on earth, and that redemption is only through the love and mercy of Jesus Christ, our Lord. We remember that we are dust, and to dust we shall return. How comforting

that God is gracious and merciful, patient, and rich in mercy to those who call on Him with repentant hearts and lives.