

First Presbyterian Church



512 Third Street SW

Rochester, Minnesota 55902

Phone 507-282-1618

February 14, 2024
Ash Wednesday

6:30 p.m.

About Ash Wednesday and Lent

On Ash Wednesday, as Lent begins, worshipers' foreheads are often marked with ashes in the sign of the cross. The ashes traditionally come from burning palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday. In the Old Testament, ashes were a sign of mourning and repentance. Today, some worshipers wipe off the ashes before leaving church, to symbolize being cleansed from sin by Jesus' death; others wear the ashes the rest of the day, carrying the cross of Christ into the world. Reciting Genesis 3:19 often accompanies the placement of ashes: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Lent has been observed by Christians since the fourth century. It is a time of reflection, penitence and spiritual renewal before Easter. Lent ends at midnight on Holy Saturday, the night before Easter Sunday. During Lent some Christians focus on giving up something. Is it absolutely necessary for the observation of Lent to give up a delicacy or a bad habit or an hour of sleep in order to pray? Who can truly say? What one does during the Lenten period should be a matter between a Christian and God. Some may decide to do something extra for their spiritual growth. Others may indeed "give up" something that's a hindrance to the spiritual life. Some may make a special sacrifice of some sort. And some may decide to improve their communication and fellowship with God by having special times of prayer throughout the day, or vow to worship in the church at every service held. The important thing is to make Lent a special time, a memorable time. A time so meaningful that it sets the tone for the rest of the entire year. At the very least it should be a time of sincere spiritual growth.

Service of Worship

Prelude

Two Chorale Preludes on "Herzlich tut mich verlangen," Op. 122, No. 9, 10

Johannes Brahms

My heart is filled with longing
To pass away in peace;
For woes are round me thronging,
And trials will not cease.
O fain would I be hasting
From thee, dark world of gloom,
To gladness everlasting;
O Jesus, quickly come!

Text: Christoph Knoll (1611), tr. Catherine Winkworth

◆ Please rise as you are able, in body or in spirit

Responsive Call to Worship

*God sent Christ into the world not to condemn the world,
but that the world might be saved through him.*

God's love endures forever.

God is our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble.

Though the waters roar and foam,

Though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

God's love endures forever.

Let us worship the Lord.

Opening Prayer

◆ Hymn 432

How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

REPTON

Prayer for Illumination

Merciful God, your word is our way of truth and life. Create in us hearts that are clean and put your Holy Spirit within us, so that we may declare your praise forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Anthem

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness

Samuel Sebastian Wesley

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and forgive me all my sin;
For I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me.

Text: Psalm 51:2-3, adapt. H. Clough-Leigher

Chancel Choir

Meditation

All Things Re-considered

Rev. T.J. Parlette

Invitation to Observe a Holy Lent

Responsive Psalm

Psalm 51:1-17

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 judgment.**

*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 body you have broken 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 Holy 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 bloodshed, 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 offering.
The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart,
O God you will not despise.**

Blessing of the Ashes

Imposition of Ashes

*If you would like to receive ashes, please come forward down the center aisle
and indicate whether you would like the ashes on your forehead or your palm.*

“Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:19)

“But God’s steadfast love endures forever.” (Psalm 136)

Concluding Prayer (responsive)

*Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
that we may show forth your glory in the world.
By the cross and Passion of our Savior,
bring us with all your saints
to the joy of Christ’s resurrection. Amen.*

The Lord's Supper

*Our communion is open to all who believe that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior.
The wine used in this sacrament is grape juice. Gluten-free wafers are available.*

Invitation

Great Thanksgiving Prayer

Words of Institution

Distribution of Elements

Music during Communion

II. Communion, from *Triptych*, Op. 58 Louis Vierne

Lord, for Thy Tender Mercy's Sake attr. Richard Farrant

Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake, lay not our sins to our charge;
but forgive that is past; and give us grace to amend our sinful lives;
to decline from sin, and incline to virtue; that we may walk with a perfect heart,
before thee now and evermore. Amen.

Text: Lidley's Prayers (1566)

Chancel Choir

Prayer after Communion

◆ **Hymn 517** Here, O Our Lord, We See You MORECAMBE

Benediction

All quietly depart.

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