

Memorial Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

Ash Wednesday

March 1, 2017

SEE THE ASHES – SHARE IN GOD'S CREATION

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

READER 1: In the beginning....
In the beginning the earth was a formless void....
Darkness covered the face of the deep
And the Divine Breath of God moved over the waters....

READER 1: When God created the earth,
A stream would rise from the earth
And water the whole face of the ground.....
Then God created the human from the dust of the earth
And breathed life into its nostrils
And so it became a living being

READER 2: God creates a human life when God breathes divine breath
into a creature made of the earth.... And the human asks,
"Who am I?" And I ask.... Who am I?

READER 1: The man and the woman ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree
– and they became ashamed. They heard the sound of the
Lord God walking in the garden – and they hid themselves
from God. And the Lord God called out to them – Where are
you?

READER 2: I eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of right and wrong –
And I become ashamed. And the Lord God calls out to me –
Where are you? And I ask – Where am I?

READER 1: The people left the garden – and entered the wasteland –
God sought them – and found them when they were most lost
– and called to them – Come back to me....

READER 2: I am lost – and need to be found. And the Lord God calls to
me – Come back to me....

READER 1: But the people of God were stubborn of heart. They
challenged God. They ignored God. They forgot God. But
God did not forget God's own people – and in the fullness of
time.....

READER 2: The word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us – But the world, though it had its being through Him, did not know Him.

READER 1: In the spring-time of last year, we gathered on the threshold of Holy Week and waved palm branches... We saw and heard the story of how far God was prepared to go in love for us... We witnessed again the events of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem – The Last Supper – His Passion – His death – His resurrection. We beheld His pain and His glory. We knew the depths of love that inspired God's sacrifice of his own Son – and yet we have lived as if nothing happened.

READER 1: The palms of last year's Holy Week have become the ashes of this year's Lent. Come back to God – not with your garments torn – but with your hearts broken... God does not ask for the sacrifice of burnt offerings – but the sacrifice – the gift – of a contrite heart.

*SONG OF RESPONSE *Have Mercy, God, upon My Life*

421

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

SCRIPTURE READING

Joel 2:12-18

Page No. 741

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2

Page No. 940

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Page No. 787

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE

LITANY OF PENITENCE

Holy and merciful God, we confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word and deed; by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We have not listened to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives.

We confess to you, O God.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways and our exploitation of other people,

We confess to you, O God.

Our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

We confess to you, O God.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

We confess to you, O God.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

We confess to you, O God.

Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrongs we have done. For our neglect of human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

Accept our repentance, O God.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

Accept our repentance, O God.

For our waste and pollution of your creation and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

Accept our repentance, O God.

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

Favorably hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

*SONG OF RESPONSE *Just as I Am, Without One Plea* 442

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Using these words: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*SONG OF FAITH *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me* 775

*BENEDICTION

We are going on a journey – a pilgrimage – but to where?

A journey – to God

A journey – to freedom

A journey – to heaven

A pilgrimage of faith.

And where do we start?

**We go back to our beginnings –
To remember what we were when God created us –
Creatures of the earth.
And to remember what we become because God loves us.**

To remember that you are dust? And unto dust you shall return?
**And to remember the Good News that God has opened the way
to freedom, heaven and to faith. Let us begin our journey of
seeing and sharing.**

Please leave the sanctuary in silence

**Please rise in body or spirit.*