



Ash Wednesday Service

A Joint Service with members and friends of:

Bush Hill Presbyterian Church

Calvary Presbyterian Church

Heritage Presbyterian Church

Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

Online Worship Resource

Wednesday, February 22, 2023 ~ 7:00 PM

(*) Please stand, as you are led.

BOLD TYPE IS SPOKEN BY THE CONGREGATION

Prelude:

LA GRACE

George Philipp Telemann

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. *John 1:16*

WELCOME

Rev. Michelle Fincher, CPC

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Rev. Dr. Rob Erickson, HPC

Please stand as you are led and join me in our responsive Call to Worship:

We come to worship as the Lenten season begins, aware of our frailty and our shortcomings.

We come seeking God's mercy, acknowledging our mortality.

Having been marked in the waters of baptism, we are marked now with ashes.

The treasures of this earth do not last; our treasure is God, our heart's true home.

***OPENING HYMN #2128 Come and Find the Quiet Center**

Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead, find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed: Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace, God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base, making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun, raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain, let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain: There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care, in the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIGHT

Rev. Dr. Bob Melone, MVPC

We give you thanks and praise, O God of endless light, through our Lord Jesus Christ. In him your light shines in our hearts and reveals the light that never fades. Through the outpouring of your Spirit you give sight to our souls, that we may see your glory in the presence of Christ. Strengthen us where we are weak, support us in our efforts to do your will, and free our tongues to sing your praise, for to you all honor and blessing are due, now and forever. Amen.

SILENT REFLECTION

CONFSSION

Rev. Dr. Barbara Heck, BHPC

Merciful God, whose ways are good and true, we confess that we have not loved as Christ has called us to love. We have shut our eyes to evils our world allows. We have refused to hear the cries of the suffering whose pain we abide. We have clung to the hostility we harbor against one another and hardened our hearts to the creative power of love. Forgive us, Lord and hear our prayer:

Open our eyes to see injustice in the world.

Give us courage to resist the powers that oppress the poor.

Open our ears to hear the cry of the needy.

Teach us generosity for sharing the abundance of your creation.

Open our minds to imagine an end to human strife.

Grant us wisdom to pursue the ways of peace.

Open our hearts to love our neighbors and our enemies near and far.

Give us the desire to embody the compassion of Christ.

For the sake of the world, and in the name of Christ, we pray.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

According to the Lord's abundant mercy, there is forgiveness for all who seek repentance and grace for all who turn their hearts to the way of Jesus.

Thanks be to God! We are forgiven. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE #447 We Are Forgiven

**We are forgiven. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.
We are forgiven. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.**

SILENT REFLECTION

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION # 2086 Open Our Eyes

**Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus, to reach out and touch him, and say that we love him. Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.**

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgement.
- 5 Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- 6 You desire truth in the inward being;[a]
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
- 9 Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right[b] spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing[c] spirit.
- 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
- 14 Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

15 O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

16 For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased.

17 The sacrifice acceptable to God[d] is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SILENT REFLECTION

EPISTLE LESSON 2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10 Rev. Dr. Barbara Heck

20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 As we work together with him,[a] we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2 For he says,

'At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.'

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! 3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

SILENT REFLECTION

GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 6:1-6, 16 -21 Rev. Dr. Bob Melone
1 "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.

2 "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. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5 "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. 6 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.

16 "And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SILENT REFLECTION

*HYMN # 442

Just as I Am

Just as I am, without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou biddest me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come; I come!
Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come; I come!

INVITATION TO IMPOSITION OF ASHES Rev. Dr. Melone & Rev. Fincher

PRAYER

Loving God, you create us from the dust of the earth. May these ashes be for us a sign of our penitence and our mortality, a reminder that by the cross we receive eternal life. Until that day when our baptism will be completed in death, grant us faith and courage to live as those whose living and dying is in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

A FINAL MOMENT OF SILENCE

Ash Wednesday, by Rev. J. Barrie Shepherd

Rev. Dr. Rob Erickson

Why not
Affirm yourself this Lent.
Be kind and gentle to your you.
Go walking, learn to breathe, read a book,
Know bread and wine and flesh,
Love yourself
Enough to give it
As a gift of love to life,
Or death.
Share hope with one who mourns,
Grief with one who laughs,
And rediscover all the yous
You left behind in getting to this place
From which, with ashes on your head, you go
In search of Easter.

***FINAL HYMN #2199, v. 1, 3, 4** *Stay with Us*

Stay with us, till night has come: Our praise to you this day be sung. Bless our bread, open our eyes: Jesus, be our great surprise.

Walk with us, the road will bend: Make all our weeping, wailing end. Wipe our tears, forgive our fears: Jesus, lift the heavy cross.

Talk with us, till we behold a joyful life you will unfold: Heal our eyes to see the prize: Jesus, take us to the light.

***COMMISSION AND BLESSING**

Rev. Dr. Barbara Heck, BHPC

POSTLUDE: ***Ah, Holy Jesus*** Cruder/Ferguson

*Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay thee, I do adore thee, and will
ever pray thee,*

think on thy pity and thy love unswerving, not my deserving.

Ash Wednesday Worship Participants:

Rev. Michelle Fincher (CPC), Jane Kerr (CPC), organist, Judy Viccellio (CPC),
director of music,

Rev. Dr. Bob Melone (MVPC), Rev. Dr. Barbara Heck (BHPC),

Rev Dr. Rob Erickson (HPC) and Rev. Glenn Fahrig (CPC), technology team