First Presbyterian and Westminster Presbyterian Churches
Wooster, Ohio

Ash Wednesday
February 17, 2021



FPC: 621 College Ave., Wooster, OH 44691
330-264-9420 www.firstpreswooster.org https://www.facebook.com/FPCWooster/

First Presbyterian Church is a Christian community dedicated to showing
God's love through worship, study, social justice, outreach, and fellowship.

Westminster: 353 East Pine Street, Wooster, OH 44691
330-263-2398 www.westminsterpresbyterianwooster.org

Westminster strives to be an "intentionally inclusive" community of believers and seekers, following the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Through worship, study, and acts of compassion aimed at peacemaking, we seek to bring about God's kingdom in how we express our faith.

More Light Church and Member of Covenant Network
Earth Care Congregation and a Matthew 25 Church

WELCOME — Reverend David Rice

PRELUDE — *Love Unknown* — *arr. Michael Burkhardt*
Ken Shafer, organ

CALL TO WORSHIP (1) — Susie Slack

One: Out of nothingness we came through birth into life
All: with the Spirit of God within us.
One: From the life of God the universe unfolded into being
All: with the Spirit of God within it.
One: From the heart of God creation goes on till the end of time
All: with the Spirit of God within it and with our spirits within it.
One: Let us embrace the God who enfolds us and forms in us this community of compassion and welcoming.
All: We bring all that we are and all that we can yet be to this holy time of worship.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (2)

From our homes you draw us to this sacred time and space, O Holy One.
We come to dwell in your presence, for you are the source of our being.
Renew us as we gather with others who search for life's purpose and meaning. **Amen**

CONFESSIONAL MEDITATION (unison) — "Ash Wednesday" by Jim Burklo — April Gamble

On my forehead,
A sign of the cross,
Smudged in ash from the fire
That burned down the McMansion of my hubris,
And, with it,
The money I should have given away,

The television I used to numb my senses,
The carpet I should have been called on,
The doors I should have opened to others,
The envelopes I should have used
To send letters of love,
The wise books I shelved prominently
So that others would think I had read them,
The blank places in my photo albums
Where my darker moments should have been remembered,
The calendars where visits with the people who needed me most
Should have been scheduled,
The couch of my complacency,
The lounge-chair of my laziness,
The shirts I stuffed with my pride,
The moccasins I should have traded with others
So we could have walked miles in them.

On my forehead,
A sign of the crossroad
Where I can turn from the way of ruin
To the way of life.

A TIME OF SILENCE

HEBREW SCRIPTURES Isaiah 58:1-12 Emma Teichert

GOSPEL READING Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 Sherry Hatter-Miller

SERVICE OF THE ASHES (3) Erin Guzmán

We pray: O Source of life and love, torn by desires to sit back
and to enjoy the beauty of the world —
to savor the blue skies and gentle days —
and by desires to recast the world and to fight its evils — to save the world . . .
Torn by all those things that hurt and confuse
and make no sense amid beauty —
yet supported by all those things that heal and hold us —
smiles, kisses, mountain vistas
and gentle waves, warm words . . .
We live in mystery.
We live torn apart at times:
so much glory,
so much pain.
We live in faith:
faith in ourselves and each other,
faith that we can create bonds of the spirit that proclaim we are not alone.
We have much health within us;
we can live through the heartache to new life.
So, for the grace of the world and all the tumble, too,
this day we give thanks . . .

< Silence >

Ash Wednesday invites us to come back to earth.
To wonder at the gift of life,

my life
our life
with the earth, the shared body of our existence.
These ashes were once trees and shrubs,
and places where life was lived to its fullest.
Once they were full of life.
Now they are black and grey.
Dry.
Lifeless.
But mixed with the waters of our baptism it makes good fertilizer:
it will help the seeds of the gospel take deeper root in us
and bring forth the fruits,
the harvest of justice, peace, and generosity.
These are ashes worth wearing.
May we accept this gift. And be blessed.
And be assured we will be different at the end of this season.
For from the burnt ashes will spring the green shoot of life
and the purple flower of attentiveness to God.
May these ashes be blessed.
May they be for us a symbol of our return to the earth.
May we be blessed.
May we be earthed in your everlasting love,
as forgiven and forgiving people.

ANTHEM *Wash Me Thoroughly (Psalm 51:2-3)* *S. S. Wesley*

Annika Balish, Emily Hasecke, Will McCullough, Carter Rogers

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION Reverend Enikő Ferenczy

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (4)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION AND SHARING THE PEACE (4)

God is with us, here in our midst:
seen as forgiveness, known as costly love.
The peace of God is here . . . to stay. **Thanks be to God!**

BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Wondrous Love* *arr. Dale Wood*

Eric J. Gastier, organ

Liturgy taken from *A Gathering for Ash Wednesday* by Rev. Rex A E Hunt (www.rexaehuntprogressive.com)

Specific liturgies are numbered as follows: (1) Pitt St Uniting; (2) Janice Huggett; (3) B. Southworth; (4) Iona

Participating in worship are David Rice, pastor (FPC); Susie Slack (FPC); April Gamble (FPC); Emma Teichert, College of Wooster Class of '24; Sherry Hatter-Miller (WPC); Erin Guzmán, College of Wooster Interim Director Religious and Spiritual Life/Interfaith Campus Ministries; Enikő Ferenczy, pastor (WPC); Ken Shafer, organist (WPC); Eric J. Gastier, Director of Music & Organist (FPC)

Earth Care Pledge: Peace and justice is God's plan for all creation. The earth and all creation are God's. God calls us to be careful, humble stewards of this earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake, and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family. As God offers all people the special gift of peace through Jesus Christ, and through Christ reconciles all to God, we are called to deal justly with one another and the earth.

The Mission of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians is to strengthen the church of Jesus Christ, with the help of God's grace. We are called to achieve this goal by furthering the inclusion of LGBTQ persons, and by working for the unity of the PC(USA). The Covenant Network of Presbyterians calls the church to bear a unified witness to generous hospitality and faithful justice.

The Mission of More Light Presbyterians: Following the risen Christ and seeking to make the Church a true community of hospitality, the mission of More Light Presbyterians is to work for the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQIA+) people in the life, ministry and witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and in society.

The Mission of the Matthew 25 Church: Matthew 25:31–46 calls us to actively engage the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. We commit ourselves to congregational vitality by acting boldly and compassionately to end systemic poverty and structural racism, serving people who are oppressed, imprisoned, poor.