

*Ash Wednesday Service*  
*February 14, 2024*



*First*  
*Presbyterian*  
*Church*



**PRELUDE and PRAYER OF PREPARATION**

**Lord, we come to this place not to wear ashes before others as a sign of our own righteousness. We do not come here this evening as a testimony to our own spirituality. We have come here to meet with our Father in heaven, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to start this journey toward the cross and his resurrection alongside him. Throughout this Lenten journey, may my eyes be turned, not to my sin or the sins of others, but to you and to your mercy and grace. Call me to that secret place where you and I may commune, that upon arising, your glory might shine toward others through the work you are doing in me. Amen.**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Leader:** As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

**People:** **And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."**

**Leader:** Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert... (Mt.3:16-4:1)

**People:** **We seek to follow you, Jesus. Lead us by your Spirit into a season of preparation and of growing faith. Amen.**

Opening Prayer:

Liturgist

**HYMN**

**"Be Thou My Vision"**

**Blue 339**

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 58:6-12

Liturgist

The Word of the Lord; **Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN**

**"Cleanse Me" (verses 1, 3)**

**Red 425**

CALL TO RECONCILIATION (from 2 Corinthians 5:20 – 6:2)

Pastor

**HYMN:**

**"Cleanse Me" (verses 2, 4)**

**Red 425**

## **RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION (From Psalm 51)**

**Leader:** Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

**People:** **Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.**

**Leader:** Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

**People:** **Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.**

**Leader:** Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

**People:** **Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.**

**Leader:** You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

**People:** **My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.**

**Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-14**

**Pastor**

**“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. ’**

The word of the Lord; **Thanks be to God**

## **MESSAGE**

**HYMN: “Seek Ye First ”**

**Blue 333**

## **IMPOSITION OF ASHES:**

**Pastor:** Return to the Lord. Leave behind all the pain. Leave behind all the hate. Come back to your true life again.

**People:** **We will return to the Lord, abandon our sins, abandon our fears, and come back to repentance and hope.**

Those who wish, may come forward to receive ashes on their foreheads or back of hands, and to dip in the waters of baptism.

**Pastor:       Return to the Lord. Discard your old ways. Give up your old sorrows. Cling to the hope found in Christ.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**RESPONSE: May Your Kingdom come.**

## INVITATION TO THANKSGIVING

### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION (inspired by Luke 16)**

**Knowing that many voices clamour and compete, we pray that these offerings given may become symbolic of our decision to serve one master, one God. Amen**

## **HYMN**

**“Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”**

**Blue 372**

## CLOSING PRAYER

As we depart from this time of connection, as we journey to the Cross and to the Resurrection of our Lord, may the hope of Christ lead you and guide you. I will be available here for personal prayer.

Father in heaven, in your goodness you pour out on your people all that they need, and satisfy those who persist in prayer. Make us bold in asking, thankful in receiving, tireless in seeking, and joyful in finding, that we may always proclaim your coming kingdom and do your will on earth as in heaven. Amen.

## PARTING MUSIC