

Ash Wednesday  
February 22, 2023



## GATHERING

*(Silence during the Prelude is requested in preparation for worship.)*

### *About the Prelude*

The Prelude is a musical offering to help move the hearts and minds of the gathering community from the daily struggles of life to the worship of God.

**PRELUDE**      Jesu, meine Freude, BWV 610      J.S. Bach

Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 639

### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Let us worship God!

*(Those who are able may stand.)*

God is our refuge and strength      Psalm 46:1-3  
a very present help in trouble.

**Therefore we will not fear,  
though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
though the waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.  
God's love endures forever.**

### **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

**Loving God, be with us in this Lenten season.  
It is hard to confront our weakness.  
It is hard to acknowledge our frailty.  
It is hard to be mortal.**

**In this season, remind us that to follow Christ  
does not entail being perfect;  
to follow Christ means to be the servant of others.  
In these forty days,  
help us to watch and wait with Christ,  
and have courage in the hour of testing.**

**In this moment, sit with us in our fear and restlessness.  
Calm our anxious hearts.  
Quiet our busy minds.  
Soothe our weary souls.  
For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

*Ash Wednesday* begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession. Aware of our failure and frailty, we express our utter reliance on God's saving grace. Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance, sorrow, and sacrifice. Traditionally, the ashes are made from the palm branches of the previous year; thus the ashes and palms together frame the season of Lent.

Forty Days and Forty Nights

**THE WORD**

This text, given sharper focus by being reduced from nine stanzas to five, reflects both on Christ's temptation in the wilderness and on the purpose and goal of Lent as preparation for Easter. It pairs well with a 17th-century German chorale setting for Psalm 130. TEXT: George Hunt Smyttan, 1856; MUSIC: Attr. Martin Herbst, 1676.

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Hear the Word of God! **Our ears are open.**

**Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

*(Old Testament, pages 846-847 in your pew Bible)*

*(Sung responsively after each scripture reading.)*

Create in me a clean heart, O God.  
**Create in me a clean heart, O God.**

*Psalm 51:10*

Renew a right spirit within me.  
**Renew a right spirit within me.**

**Psalm 51**

Carl Mueller

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from thy presence,  
and take not thy holy spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,  
and uphold me with thy free spirit.  
Then will I teach transgressors thy ways,  
and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

**Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

*(New Testament, pages 5-6 in your pew Bible)*

**SERMON**

Margie Quinn

**INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE  
OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE**

## LITANY OF PENITENCE

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Rend your hearts and not your garments; return to your God.  
**For God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

We know well our misdeeds, and our sin is ever before us.  
**Wash away our guilt, O God, and heal our brokenness.**

Break forth light into the dark places of our hearts, and confront us with our hidden and secret sins — all that we keep in the dark.

**O God, open our hearts.**

We lay before you our preoccupation with ourselves,  
**O God, open our hearts.**

Our lustful imaginations and our arrogant ambitions,  
**O God, open our hearts.**

Our simmering grudges and our half-acknowledged animosities,  
**O God, open our hearts.**

Our rush to judge others and our intermittent compassion,  
**O God, open our hearts.**

Our past bitterness that we have not yet offered to you,  
**O God, open our hearts.**

The stinginess of our kindness toward ourselves and toward others,  
**O God, open our hearts.**

The private comforts to which we cling,  
**O God, open our hearts.**

The fear of failure, which saps our initiative and our courage,  
**O God, open our hearts.**

The pessimism that is an insult to your will and power,  
**O God, open our hearts.**

*(Time of silent prayer)*

Here and now, O Holy One,  
we bring our sins to you; we lie open in your sight.  
You despise nothing you have made,  
and you restore all who come you to in humility and honesty.  
Let your piercing light be our healing,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ,  
who both taught us and brought us your forgiveness.  
In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

*(Silence)*

## **IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

**Creator God,  
out of your love and mercy  
you breathed into the dust the breath of life,  
creating us to love you and each other.  
May these ashes be a symbol of  
our mortality and repentance,  
and remind us of your gift of life,  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

*(The people will move forward as directed  
by the ushers. Ashes in the sign of the cross  
are placed on foreheads with the words,*

*“Remember that you are dust  
and to dust you shall return.”*

*Once you have received the ashes, please  
return to your seat, using the outside aisles.)*

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 and eternal life.**

**\*THE LORD'S PRAYER**

## SENDING

### *About Hymn 816*

This hymn is a testimony of experience. The original seven-stanza German text (based on Psalm 55:22) and its tune were created by the author / composer at the age of twenty in thanksgiving for finding employment many weeks after being left almost penniless following a robbery. TEXT and MUSIC: Georg Neumark, 1641.

### **\*HYMN 816**

WER NUR DEN LIEBEN GOTT

If Thou but Trust in God to Guide Thee

### **\*BLESSING AND CHARGE**

### **\*RESPONSE**

Create in me a clean heart, O God.

**Create in me a clean heart, O God.**

Renew a right spirit within me.

**Renew a right spirit within me.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

*(All may depart in silence.)*

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*\*(Those who are able may stand.)*

### **SERVICE NOTES**

**LITURGIST:** Rev. Dr. Guy D. Griffith, Associate Pastor for Adult Education and Spiritual Nurture.

**MUSICIANS:** Westminster Choir; John Semingson, Director of Music Ministries; Dale Nickell, Organist and Associate Director of Music Ministries.

**LENT:** The word “Lent” is derived from the Old English word *lecten*, meaning “Spring,” which in turn derives from the Old High German *lenzin*, referring to “the lengthening of days.” The season we know as Spring was originally called Lent. Lent gradually adhered strictly to church practice, and Spring came to designate the season following Winter.

Lent lasts for forty weekdays plus Sundays, a number richly grounded in Biblical tradition. In the Bible there are one hundred-twenty references to the number forty, among them: the days of Noah’s deluge; the days that Moses spent on the mountain; the years Israel wandered in the wilderness; the days of Elijah’s journey to the cave of the “still, small voice;” and Jesus’ forty-day wilderness sojourn in which he was tempted by Satan.

Lent has traditionally been a time in which Christians have engaged in self-reflection, fasting, prayer, confession and repentance in anticipation of the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. At Westminster, in order to emphasize the meaning of Lent, we adopt a more penitential posture in worship. There are no flowers; no festive choir processional; no *Act of Praise*, following the *Confession and Pardon*; and at several points in the service we incorporate the ancient and plaintive supplication from Psalm 51: “Create in me a clean heart, O God.”

## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

### APRIL 2 – PASSION/PALM SUNDAY

PROCESSION OF PALMS  
CHIMING CHILDREN  
ALLELUIA, GLORIA, AND JUBILATE CHILDREN'S CHOIRS  
WESTMINSTER CHOIR

### APRIL 6 - MAUNDY THURSDAY

7:00 P.M. SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION IN THE SANCTUARY  
STRIPPING OF THE CHANCEL  
LAUDATE YOUTH CHOIR

### APRIL 7 - GOOD FRIDAY

7:00 P.M. CHORAL SERVICE OF DARKNESS IN THE SANCTUARY  
JULIUS TABERY, CANTOR  
WESTMINSTER CHOIR

### APRIL 9 - THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

SERVICES: 7:30 A.M., 9:15 A.M., AND 11:00 A.M.  
WITH BRASS QUINTET  
LAUDATE YOUTH CHOIR  
WESTMINSTER CHOIR

*(HOLY COMMUNION AT THE 7:30 A.M. SERVICE ONLY)*

## Westminster Presbyterian Church

### *Purpose Statement*

*Ordinary people testifying to the extraordinary light  
found in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

“For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.”

*(2 Corinthians 4:6-7)*

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