

Ash Wednesday  
February 14, 2024  
Midday Service

# 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.

## 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.

## About Hymn 166

Like many of this author's hymns, this text was written primarily for children but works equally well in reminding adults how Lent connects us with Christ's temptation in the wilderness and prepares us for Easter. The 16th-century English psalm tune provides sturdy support. TEXT: Claudia F. I. Hernaman, 1873; MUSIC: Day's Psalter, 1562.

## PRELUDE

Suite in E Minor, BuxWV 263  
Allemande - Courante - Sarabande

Dietrich Buxtehude

## \*OPENING SENTENCES

Let us worship God!

*(Those who are able may stand.)*

Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
**Who made heaven and earth.**

The mighty one, God the Lord,  
speaks and summons the earth  
from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Praise the Lord.

**The Lord's name be praised.**

## \*HYMN 166

ST. FLAVIAN

Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days

## Psalm 51

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving kindness; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- 2 **Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.**
- 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 **Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.**

And so you are justified when you speak  
and upright in your judgment.

- 5 **Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,  
a sinner from my mother's womb.**
- 6 For behold, you look for truth deep within me,  
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
- 7 **Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;  
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.**
- 8 Make me hear of joy and gladness,  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- 9 **Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquities.**
- 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 11 **Cast me not away from your presence  
and take not your holy Spirit from me.**
- 12 Give me the joy of your saving help again  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
- 13 **I shall teach your ways to the wicked,  
and sinners shall return to you.**
- 14 Deliver me from death, O God,  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,  
O God of my salvation.
- 15 **Open my lips, O Lord,  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**
- 16 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,  
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
- 17 **The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not  
despise.**
- 18 Be favorable and gracious to Zion,  
and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

19 **Then you will be pleased with the appointed sacrifices,  
with burnt-offerings and oblations; then shall they offer  
young bullocks upon your altar.**

God of mercy,  
you know us better than we know ourselves,  
and still you love us.  
Wash us from all our sins,  
create in us clean hearts,  
and strengthen us by your Holy Spirit  
that we may give you praise;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

**Scripture Reading**

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

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.**

**LITANY OF PENITENCE**

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

**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.**

*(Silence)*

## IMPOSITION OF ASHES

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

**Almighty God,  
you have created us out of  
the dust of the earth.  
May these ashes be for us a sign  
of our mortality and repentance,  
and reminder that only by your gracious gift  
are we given everlasting 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.**

## PRAYER

**God of compassion,  
through your Son Jesus Christ,  
you reconciled your people to yourself.  
Following his example of prayer and fasting,  
may we obey you with willing hearts  
and serve one another in holy love;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## SENDING

### \*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

**LITURGISTS:** Rev. Dr. Guy D. Griffith, Associate Pastor for Adult Education and Spiritual Nurture; Rev. Heidi Hudnut-Beumler, Associate Pastor for Congregational Care.

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

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## **HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE**

### **MARCH 24 – PASSION/PALM SUNDAY**

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

### **MARCH 28 - MAUNDY THURSDAY**

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

### **MARCH 29 - GOOD FRIDAY**

7:00 P.M. CHORAL SERVICE OF DARKNESS IN THE SANCTUARY  
WESTMINSTER CHOIR

### **MARCH 31 - 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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