

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Northampton Presbyterian Church

Ash Wednesday

February 22, 2023

6:30 PM



PRELUDE

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: For just such a time as this, we were made. In the image of God, loving, grace-giving, and wise, we are created to be the hands, hearts, and feet of divinity.

MANY: We gather on this Ash Wednesday, not because we must, not to feel badly about ourselves, but to start out on the trail leading to the resurrection.

HYMN

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy

RESTORATION

**Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and power.**

**I will arise and go to Jesus;
He will embrace me in his arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior,
O there are ten thousand charms.**

**Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome;
God's free bounty glorify,
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings you nigh.**

**I will arise and go to Jesus;
He will embrace me in his arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior,
O there are ten thousand charms.**

**Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.**

**I will arise and go to Jesus;
He will embrace me in his arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior,
O there are ten thousand charms.**

**Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of him.**

**I will arise and go to Jesus;
He will embrace me in his arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior,
O there are ten thousand charms.**

RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Inspired by 2 Kings 2, Psalm 51

ONE: God of the blazing chariots, the whirling wind, the sacred silence,

MANY: **Listen softly to the confessions of our hearts.**

(We pause for a moment of silent, personal confession.)

ONE: Create clean hearts in us.

MANY: Renew right spirits within us.

ONE: Shelter us within your presence.

MANY: Sustain us by your Holy Spirit. Restore to us the joy of our salvation.

ONE: Blazing, whirling, sacred God,

MANY: Inhabit and transform our lives. Amen.

RESPONSIVE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

ONE: As Lent begins, know that God understands how we struggle to stay open and compassionate. The invitation is not to focus on our inadequacies, but on God's gift of grace and love which transforms our hearts and minds. That gift is given to us again, here and now. Be encouraged and know you are forgiven.

May the peace of God be with you

MANY: And also with you.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

NEW TESTAMENT READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

ASH WEDNESDAY MESSAGE

The Mark of a Christian

Rev. Judith A. Dwyer

HYMN

Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God

SARADAY

**Create in me a clean heart, O God;
Create in me a clean heart, O God;
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me.**

**Cast me not away from your presence;
Cast me not away from your presence;
Cast me not away from your presence,
And take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

**Restore to me the joy of your salvation;
Restore to me the joy of your salvation;
Restore to me the joy of your salvation;
And uphold me with your free Spirit.**

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*You are invited to come forward at this time to receive ashes.
Either your forehead or, if you prefer, your hand will be marked
with the sign of the cross as a tangible reminder of our sinfulness
and mortality and of our utter dependence upon the grace of God
and the power of Christ's resurrection.*

ONE: God of the blazing chariots, the whirling wind, the sacred silence,

MANY: Listen softly to the confessions of our hearts.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

WALK WITH ME

I want Jesus to walk with me;

I want Jesus to walk with me;

All along my pilgrim journey,

Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

**In my trials, Lord, walk with me;
In my trials, Lord, walk with me;
When my heart is almost breaking,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.**

**When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me;
When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me;
When my head is bowed in sorrow,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.**

RESPONSIVE BENEDICTION

ONE: God with whom we walk this Lenten path

MANY: Bless us this day as we begin the long journey to the cross. Come to this place and remember your covenant with us. Remember the promise you made with us mere mortals to remain with us despite our dust. Shower your Spirit upon us for we need direction on this long road ahead. Care for us, your children, as we weather this winding road, following the faithful path of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Congregation may exit in silence following the Benediction.

WORSHIP NOTES:

The **Call to Worship** is excerpted from “An Ash Wednesday Liturgy” written by Tim Graves and posted on LiturgyBits. You can find the whole liturgy here: <https://liturgybits.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/an-ash-wednesday-liturgy>

The **Prayer of Confession** is written by Joanna Harader and posted on Spacious Faith.
<https://spaciousfaith.com>

The **Assurance of Pardon** is written by Ann Siddall, and posted on the website of the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre. <http://www.stillpointsa.org.au>

The **Pastoral Prayer** is adapted from a prayer by Walter Breuggemann, and published in *Prayers for a Privileged People* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008), p. 27-28. Posted on Journey with Jesus.
<http://www.journeywithjesus.net/poemsandprayers>

The **Benediction** is a prayer written by Stephen Fearing and posted on Wild and Precious Life.
<http://www.stephenmfearing.com>

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