



*Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving. Spirit, open my heart.*

Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021

First Presbyterian Church, Gathered Online

PRELUDE

OPENING SENTENCES

From dust we came, and to dust we shall return.

While we are here, we worship the living God.

We have nothing and yet possess everything.

We are dying, and yet we are alive!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you despise nothing you have made and you forgive the sins of all who trust in you. Create in us new and contrite hearts, that truly repenting of our sins, and acknowledging our brokenness, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

HYMN 435

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

IN BABILONE

1. There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven.
There is no place where earth's failings have such kindly judgment given.
2. For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind.
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's Word,
and our lives reflect thanksgiving for the goodness of our Lord.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Merciful God,
your Word is our way of truth and life.
Create in us hearts that are clean

and put your Holy Spirit within us,
so that we may receive your grace
and declare your praise forever;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

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

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

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

HOMILY

INVITATION TO OBSERVE A HOLY LENT

Beloved people of God: every year at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life in the paschal mystery. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marks the penitence of this community.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of love, and by meditating on God's word. Now let us bow before God, our creator and redeemer, and confess our sin.

PSALM 51

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: Creator God, you fashioned us out of dust,
breathing your Spirit into us,
so we might sing your praise.
Two: But we have denounced your gift of life
in order to be our own gods,
clinging to death-dealing idols of our own making.
Three: We have denied our creaturely status,
seeking to lord it over those we label "less-than."
One: We squelch all who are different
through ignoring, belittling, murdering, and bombing.
Two: We believe survival-of-the-fittest lies,
discounting the weak,
and profiting by others' pain.
Three: Not trusting in your providence,
we stop our ears to cries of those in need
because we're afraid we won't have enough.
One: We have been unfaithful stewards, O Lord.

Two: We live in a state of sin among a people of sin.
One: Save for your grace, we perish.
Two: Remember our making, Creator God;
remember we are dust.
Three: Have mercy on us according to your loving kindness.
Breathe new life into us once more,
so we might be the people you created us to be.
Restore unto us the joy of your salvation
that we might do justice, love kindness,
and walk humbly with the Lord Jesus Christ,
in whose name we pray,
Amen.

You are invited into a time of personal meditation and confession as we sing:

HYMN 698 *Take, O Take Me as I Am*

Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be;
Set your seal upon my heart and live in me.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the promise of God:
“I will sprinkle clean water upon you,
and you will be clean from all your uncleanness,
and from all your idols I will cleanse you.
A new heart I will give you,
and a new spirit I will put within you;
and I will remove from your body the heart of stone
and give you a heart of flesh.
I will put my spirit within you,
and make you follow my statutes
and be careful to observe my ordinances.”
Friends, the promises of God are true:
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross
that we might be dead to sin and alive to all that is good.
In the name of Jesus Christ you are forgiven.
Live now as new people,
free to love God and neighbor.

THE EUCHARIST

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S TABLE

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

THE LORD’S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 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, forever. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD & THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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.

HYMN 692

Spirit, Open My Heart

WILD MOUNTAIN THYME

Refrain:

**Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving.
Spirit, open my heart.**

1. God, replace my stony heart with a heart that's kind and tender.
All my coldness and fear to your grace I now surrender. *Refrain*
2. Write your love upon my heart as my law, my goal, and story.
In each thought, word, and deed, may my living bring you glory. *Refrain*
3. May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of sister, brother.
In the welcome of Christ, may we welcome one another. *Refrain*

BLESSING AND CHARGE

May the steadfast love of God,
the abundant grace of Jesus Christ,
and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit
be with you this day and always. **Amen.**

Psalm 51:1, 11

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus:
If any wish to be my disciples
let them take up the cross
and follow me. **Amen.**

Mark 8:34