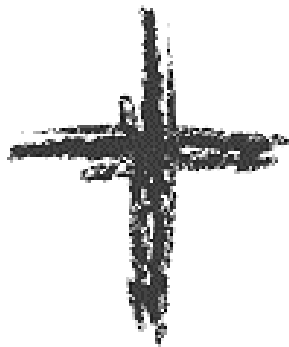


Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.



ASH WEDNESDAY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF HASTINGS

FEBRUARY 14, 2024

Leading Worship: Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett
Organist – Linda Vollweiler, Chancel Choir directed by Dr. Brett Epperson

*(*Indicates the congregation shall stand as they are able.)*

PRELUDE "Meditation" Craig A. Penfield
Linda Vollweiler

WELCOME Greg Allen-Pickett

CHORAL INTROIT "Holy Spirit, Come to Us"
Chancel Choir, director Brett Epperson

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Joel 2)

Blow the horn in Zion; give a shout on my holy mountain!

Let all the people of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming.

It is near— a day of darkness and no light, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

Like blackness spread out upon the mountains and the plains.

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your hearts,

With fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow;

Tear your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the Lord your God, for God is merciful and compassionate;

God is very patient, full of faithful love, and ready to forgive.

We come to reflect and repent. We come to recognize that we need Jesus.

We come to begin the journey to the cross during this Season of Lent.

*HYMN "Hear My Prayer, O God"

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

We have many treasures on earth that we hold too dearly,

That we withhold from others in need.

When we sin against neighbor, condone injustice, and quarrel with one another,

We sin against you, O God.

Forgive us, we pray, for we are broken in spirit.

Forgive us, we pray, for we are broken in spirit.

Do not see us for our faults, and do not go away from us.

Keep us always in your presence so that we may be restored.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of mercy, we need the light of your Word to break forth like the dawn. If you will guide us continually, then even the parched places in us will be like a watered garden. If words of blame are replaced with your Word of grace and truth, then our crumbling foundations can be rebuilt for generations. By the power of your Holy Spirit, speak to us through your Holy Word and do not hold back. In Christ's name, we ask it. Amen.

1st SCRIPTURE

Selections of Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

You desire truth in the inward being; therefore, teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

MEDITATION

2nd SCRIPTURE

Psalm 103:6-14 (CEB)

The Lord works righteousness; does justice for all who are oppressed.

God made his ways known to Moses; made his deeds known to the Israelites.

The Lord is compassionate and merciful, very patient, and full of faithful love.

God won't always play the judge; he won't be angry forever.

He doesn't deal with us according to our sin or repay us according to our wrongdoing, because as high as heaven is above the earth, that's how large God's faithful love is for those who honor him.

As far as east is from west—that's how far God has removed our sin from us.

Like a parent feels compassion for their children— that's how the Lord feels compassion for those who honor him.

Because God knows how we're made, God remembers we're just dust.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

In life and in death, I belong to God.

(The congregation is invited to come forward and have ashes imposed on their forehead or hand. At the imposition of ashes, the one imposing ashes says the first words, and the congregant may respond with the words printed in bold.)

MUSIC

"Sign Us with Ashes"

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray for the needs of the world, saying, Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, as we turn our attention to the Season of Lent, we pray that you will guide us in the days ahead. As we journey with Jesus Christ, give us an abiding sense of your presence, an unguarded sense of ourselves, and an awareness of the needs of this world. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, as we are marked with the ashes of earth, we bring before you the frailty of our very human lives: the fragility of our health, the tenuousness of our accomplishments and plans, the changing nature of even our closest relationships. Grant us patience in suffering and healing from our ills. Give us, in equal measure, humility and hope in our pursuits. Bind us in covenantal love that is both constant yet able to change according to the needs and circumstances before us.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Just God, you call us to loosen the bonds of injustice, to care for those in need, to lift the burdens that bind others. We ask you to increase our courage and our will to work for the freedom and peace you envision and demand. We pray for an end to warfare and conflict, accepting our calling to be peacemakers. We pray for an end to hunger and homelessness, knowing we are called to share our bread and to open our doors. We pray for an end to false righteousness, evil speech, and shallow piety in our lives, in the church, in our national life, and among all the nations.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Forever God, we pray that your kingdom will come in fullness; that what is perishable will be raised imperishable, and that death itself will be swallowed up in victory;
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayers. Amen.**

*CLOSING HYMN

"I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"

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*BENEDICTION AND BLESSING

*(Following the Benediction and Blessing,
You are invited to sit as long as you would like and to depart in silence)*

Join us every Sunday during the Season of Lent as we reflect on "The Call to Serve"

Lenten Sermon Series: "The Call to Serve"

2/18, Mark 10:17-21: The Upside-down Kingdom

2/25, Mark 10:32-52: Not to be served, but to serve

3/3, Mark 12:1-12: Jesus as the community cornerstone

3/10, Mark 12:28-44: The greatest commandment

3/17, Mark 13: The call to be watchful and hopeful

3/24, Mark 11: Humble yet Triumphant, Palm Sunday