

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, you despise nothing you have made and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts, that, truly repenting of our sins and acknowledging our brokenness, we may obtain 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. Amen.

Hymn "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days"

First Reading Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Second Reading Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Homily & Invitation to the Observance of the Lenten Discipline

Litany of Penitence

One: Let us pray.

All: 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.

One: 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.

All: Have mercy on us, O God.

One: 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.

All: Have mercy on us, O God.

One: We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness: The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

All: we confess to you, O God.

One: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

All: we confess to you, O God.

One: Our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those who are more fortunate than ourselves,

All: we confess to you, O God.

One: Our negligence in prayers and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

All: we confess to you, O God.

One: 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,

All: accept our repentance, O God.

One: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

All: accept our repentance, O God.

One: For our waste and pollution of your creation and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

All: accept our repentance, O God.

One: Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us!

All: Favorably hear us, O God, for your mercy is great!

Imposition of Ashes

(Those who wish to receive the sign of ashes are invited to come forward at this time, making one line down the center aisle, and returning to your seat by the side aisles. If you wish to remain where you are, please do so in silent prayer. If you are unable to come forward, please let us know, and Jason will come to you.)

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 our Lord. Amen.

Blessing & Dismissal



A Service for Ash Wednesday

Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church

7:00pm

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

Lord, who throughout these forty days for us did fast and pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.

As you with Satan did contend and did the victory win, O give us strength to persevere, in you to conquer sin.

And through these days of penitence, and through this Passiontide, yes, evermore, in life and death, O Lord, with us abide.

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near – a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting with weeping, and with mourning; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children; even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, "Where is their God?"

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like they hypocrites, for they love to disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."