



# J.J. White Memorial Presbyterian Church

**ASH WEDNESDAY**

February 22, 2023 • 5:30 PM

## Gathering

**Welcome and announcements**

*Whitney Rawlings*

**Prelude**

*Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy*

*arr. Cindy Berry*

**Introit**

*Change My Heart, Oh God*

*arr. Benjamin Harlan*

**\*Call to worship**

God says, Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers.

**God says, Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist.**

Is this not the fast that God chooses? To loose the bonds of injustice, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

**We are to share our bread with the hungry, bring the homeless poor into our house, clothe the naked, and not hide ourselves from our own kind.**

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, **and God will say, Here I am.**

**\*Hymn no. 451 (verses 1 & 4)** *Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy*

ARISE

**Prayer of the day**

God of our salvation, we long to be reconciled to you. Help us to clear away any obstacle that prevents us from accepting the grace of Christ. No matter what we face in this life, increase in us knowledge and patience, kindness and holiness of spirit, genuine love and truthful speech, so that, by the power of God at work in us, we may live even as we are dying and rejoice even in our own sorrows. Though it may seem that we have nothing, if we are reconciled to you we have everything, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## The Word

**Prayer for illumination**

In this purple-hued season, 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 and do not hold back. In Christ's name we ask it. **Amen.**

**Scripture:** *Joel 2:12, 1-17; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21*

**Sermon**

*Mud and Ashes*

*the Reverend Chris Richardson*

**\*Hymn no. 447**

*See Ye First the Kingdom of God*

LAFFERTY

**Reading from the Psalter**

*Psalms 51*

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

**Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.**

For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before.

**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.

**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

**Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.**

Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

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

Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

**Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

Let me teach your ways to offender, and sinners shall be restored to you.

**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

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

**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

**Favor God with our good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in the appointed sacrifices, in burnt and whole offerings; then young bulls shall be offered upon your altar.**

## Litany of repentance

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. For the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives

**Have mercy on us, O God,**

For our self-indulgent appetites and ways and for our exploitation of other people,

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

For our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

For our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and for our dishonesty in daily life and work,

**Have mercy on us O God.**

For our negligence in prayer and worship, and for our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

**Have mercy on us, 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.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

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

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

For our waste and failure to care for your creation and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

**Have mercy on us, O God,**

Restore us, O God of our salvation, and show us your steadfast love.

**Turn to us in your mercy and redeem us. Amen.**

## Imposition of ashes

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 penitence, for it is only by your gracious gift that we are given the promise of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior, we pray. **Amen.**

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

## Sending

**\*Hymn no. 542 (verses 1 & 3)**

*Near to the Heart of God*

MCAFFEE

## Charge and blessing

Practice your piety not before others, but before God. Give generously, but quietly; pray constantly, but confidentially; fast with gratitude to God; and store up that which is in your heart; for it cannot be taken from you.

The blessing of God, who hears when you call; the grace of Christ, who reconciles you; the power of the Holy Spirit, who sustains you; remain with you in these Lenten days and for all your days and forevermore.

## Postlude

*Lord, I Want to Be a Christian*

*arr. James Koerts*

*\*Please stand as you are able*

## Welcome to the Reverend Chris Richardson

Rev. Chris Richardson works part-time as a chaplain for Hospice Ministries and is an elder in full connection in the United Methodist Church. A graduate of Duke Divinity School, Chris has lived in Pike County since marrying husband Kevin in 2004. They have three children: Colin, Brooke, and Emma.

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