

J.J. White Memorial Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)



Rev. Cassie Alston, Pastor

Jennifer Sanders, Director of Music Ministry

Glenn Sanders, Choir Director

Corner of Third and Delaware Streets

110 Third Street

McComb, Mississippi 39648

(601) 684-4189



J. J. White Memorial Presbyterian Church

Ash Wednesday

March 5, 2025 • 6:00 PM

Gathering

Prelude

Search Me, O God

arr. Greg Howlett

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Cassie Alston

Introit

Change My Heart, O God

arr. Benjamin Harlan

***Call to Worship**

John 3:17

God sent Christ into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

God's love endures forever.

***Hymn No. 441**

Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling

THOMPSON

***Opening Prayer**

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 Jesus Christ our redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Word

Anthem

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy

arr. Ronald Turner

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 might receive your grace and declare your praise forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

Homily

With All Your Heart

Rev. Cassie Alston

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 the 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.

(A time of silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.)

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 me.

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; that the body you have broken may 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 offenders, 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.**

(People are invited to come forward to receive the imposition of ashes.)

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

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
that we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of our Savior,
bring us with all the saints to the joy of your resurrection.

Sending

***Hymn No. 445**

Just As I Am

WOODWORTH

***Charge and Blessing**

1 Thess. 5:23

Disciples of Jesus, let us observe a holy Lent. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

May the God of peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being – spirit, soul, and body – free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

All depart quietly.

****Please stand as you are able.***

Announcements

Welcome to worship!

All who worship here are joyfully welcomed into our midst! To our visitors, we offer a special welcome and invite you to join us again soon. Please fill out the blue card in your pew and place it in the offering plate when passed.

Meeting Jesus at the Table: Wednesday Night Dinner and Bible Study

The Fellowship Committee and Rev. Alston will be hosting Wednesday night meals and a Lenten Bible study, Meeting Jesus at the Table, beginning Wednesday, March 12 through April 9, 5:15-6:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Participants are invited to bring food donations for MICA. All are welcome!

The Bible study will be based on portions of *Meeting Jesus at the Table: A Lenten Study* by Cynthia M. Campbell and Christine Coy Fohr (Westminster John Know Press, 2023).

3/12	Dining Alfresco	John 6:1-14
3/19	The Welcome Table	Matthew 9:9-13
3/26	Dinner Interrupted	Luke 7:36-50
4/2	Excuses and Invitations	Luke 14:15-24
4/9	Not the Last Supper	Matthew 26:17-30; Luke 24:13-35

Congregational Meeting

A congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, March 16, immediately following the worship service. The purpose of this meeting is for the Session to present the 2025 budget to the congregation.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, 3/5	6:00 PM	Ash Wednesday Service
Thursday, 3/6	9:00 AM	Prayer Group (919 N. James St.)
	10:30 AM	Bible Study (Fellowship Hall)
	5:00 PM	Knotty Knitters (Ewell Martin Room)
Sunday, 3/9	9:00 AM	Breakfast (Ewell Martin Room)
	9:15 AM	Youth Sunday School (Youth Room)
	9:30 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Worship: First Sunday in Lent
	11:45 AM	Session Meeting (Ewell Martin Room)

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Sundays

Breakfast: 9:00 AM • Sunday School: 9:30 AM • Worship: 10:30 AM

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