

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BLAIRSTOWN, NJ



# AshWednesday

7:00 PM

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

March 5, 2025

### GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

**PRELUDE:** *"O Mensch, bewein' dein Sünde gross" (O man, bewail thy sins so great)*  
*by Johann Sebastian Bach*

**WELCOME:** Pastor David Harvey

**CONTEMPLATIVE HYMN:** *No. 333 Seek Ye First* (v. 1)  
***Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,  
And all these things shall be added unto you. Al-le-lu, al-le-lu-ia!***

**\* CALL TO WORSHIP:** Emily (Maier) Arena

L: God of gifts and God of grace, fill us with pure hearts that we may see Jesus.

**P: Fill us with humble hearts that we may hear Jesus.**

L: Fill our hearts with love that we may know Jesus.

**P: Fill us with hearts of passion that we may become like Jesus.**

L: Fill our hearts with faith that we may forgive like Jesus.

**P: Fill us with hearts of forgiveness that we may serve like Jesus.**

L: Fill our hearts with discernment that we may see the way of Jesus.

**P: Fill us with hearts of integrity that we may worship you in spirit and in truth.**

L: With great gratitude and gladness, let us worship God.

**\* HYMN:** *Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes* *No. 2138 Sing the Faith*

***Sunday's palms are Wednesday's ashes as another Lent begins;  
thus we kneel before our Maker in contrition for our sins.***

***We have marred baptismal pledges, in rebellion gone astray;  
now, returning, seek forgiveness; grant us pardon, God, this day!***

***We have failed to love our neighbors, their offences to forgive,  
Have not listened to their troubles, nor have cared just how they live,  
We are jealous, proud, impatient, loving over much our things,  
May the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.***

***We are hasty to judge others, blind to proof of human need;  
and our lack of understanding demonstrates our inner greed;  
we have wasted earth's resources; and want and suffering we've ignored;  
come and cleanse us, then restore us; make new hearts within us, Lord!***

\* Please stand if you are able.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION:** *(in silence and in unison)*

Merciful God, whose Son, Jesus the Christ, is the light of the world: In his penetrating light we acknowledge our darkness; in his constant grace our careless love; in his generous giving our grasping; in his equal justice our dire prejudice; in his fortitude our fear of failure and fear of the unknown; in his inclusive love our exclusive division; in his sacrifice our sins.

Forgive our sin, O God. Make us mindful of our own mortality, our fallibility, and our life's brevity, for in Christ's cross is our forgiveness; in his resurrection is our enduring hope. This pardon and promise we claim in penitence and in faith; Amen.

**\* ASSURANCE OF PARDON:**

L: Friends, have you heard? Have you believed? Have you accepted the good news of the Gospel?

**P: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Let us forgive one another.**

**\* CELEBRATION OF CHRIST'S FORGIVENESS:** *No. 298 There's a Wideness in Christ's Mercy (v. 1)*

*There's a wideness in Christ's mercy, like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in Christ'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 judgement given.*

**\* EXCHANGE OF CHRIST'S PEACE:** L: The Peace of Christ be with you.

**P: And also with you.**

L: Welcome one another *with Christ's peace.*

## PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

**SCRIPTURE:** *Psalm 51: 1-4, 6-14* (Please read responsively) Emily (Maier) Arena

L: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion and mercy blot out my transgressions.

**P: Wash me through and through from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**

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

**P: Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, and so you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. You desire truth in my inward being; you teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

L: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

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

L: Hide your face from my sins, and wipe away all my guilt.

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

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

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

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

**P: My God, My God, my deliverer, deliver me from bloodshed, and I shall sing the praises of your salvation. Open my lips, that my mouth may proclaim your praise.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 6: 5-6, 19–21 Pastor David Harvey

**MEDITATION:** *Making Wednesday's Ashes* Pastor David Harvey

\* **HYMN:** *What Wondrous Love Is This* vv. 1 & 3

***What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul, What wondrous love is this,  
O my soul! What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss  
To bear the heavy cross for my soul, for my soul, To bear the heavy cross for my soul!  
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on. And when from death I'm free,  
I'll sing on; And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,  
And through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on. And through eternity I'll sing on.***

**INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE:** Pastor Harvey

Friends in Christ, 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 reading and meditating on the Word of God.

**PRAYER FOR THE ASHES & LORD'S PRAYER:**

L: Our heavenly Father, in love and mercy you have created us, given life to us, and promised to be with us on the paths that life's journey brings. As we begin our Lenten journey, may this ancient practice of imposing ashes remind us of our human mortality, our personal fragility, and human fallibility, as well as reassure us of the gift of eternity, promised by Jesus himself. This we pray in Christ's name.

**P: Give us grace to accept our human finitude.**

L: Give us faith to face the future with fortitude.

**P: Give us hope to believe in eternal life with certitude.**

**All: Give us love that we may love with Jesus' magnitude. This we pray in Jesus' name, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, who taught us to pray, saying, "Our Father, . . . Amen."**

**IMPOSITION OF THE ASHES**

## DEPARTING IN GOD'S NAME

\* **HYMN:** No. 84

*In the Cross of Christ*

vv. 1 & 4

***In the cross of Christ I glory, Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story Gathers round its head sublime.  
Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, By the cross are sanctified;  
Peace is there that knows no measure, Joys that through all time abide.***

\* **DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING**

\* **CONGREGATIONAL BENEDICTION:** No. 596 *May the Lord, Mighty God*

***May the Lord, mighty God, bless and keep you forever.  
Grant you peace, perfect peace, courage in every endeavor.  
Lift up your eyes and see God's face, full of grace forever;  
May the Lord, mighty God, bless and keep you forever.***

**POSTLUDE:** "Lobt Gott, ihr Christen alle gleich" (Praise God, all Christians equally)  
*BWV 609 by Johann Sebastian Bach*



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### ASSISTING DURING THIS EVENING'S ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

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**Greeter:** Lisa Besser

**Usher:** Jen McElroy

**Worship Leader:** Emily (Maier) Arena

**Pastor:** Rev. David Harvey



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## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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