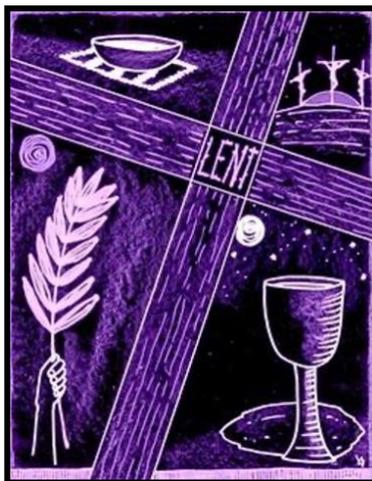


Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church – March 5, 2025  
Ash Wednesday  
Church in person and Livestream on YouTube at 7:00 pm



**Welcome**

**Opening Music**

“Forty Days and Forty Nights”

HERBST

**Call to Worship** [*responsive*]

If we have days when we feel a little bit lost and a little bit found,  
**then we are in the right place.**

If we have days when we are desperate for rest and eager to grow,  
**then we are in the right place.**

If we have days when our prayers could be both shouts and silence,  
**then we are in the right place.**

God meets us here, in the messy middle of our lives.

**So may we bring our full selves into this service and into this season.**

With God’s help, may it be so.

**Let us worship our all-loving God.**

**Opening Prayer** [*responsive*]

Holy Spirit, Creator of clean hearts:

as water rushes

into an empty hole,

may your sacramental silence

fill the emptiness within us.

**God in Community, we pray in your holy name,**

**our Treasure, our Hope, our Joy. Amen.**

**Hymn** [*stand*]

“Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days”

Glory to God, #166

**Scripture** [*responsive*]

Psalm 51:10–17 CEB

Create a clean heart for me, God;  
put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!  
**Please don't throw me out of your presence;  
please don't take your holy spirit away from me.**

Return the joy of your salvation to me  
and sustain me with a willing spirit.

**Then I will teach wrongdoers your ways,  
and sinners will come back to you.**

Deliver me from violence, God, God of my salvation,  
so that my tongue can sing of your righteousness.  
**Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.**

You don't want sacrifices.  
If I gave an entirely burned offering,  
you wouldn't be pleased.  
**A broken spirit is my sacrifice, God.  
You won't despise a heart, God, that is broken and crushed.**

**Homily**

LeAnn Hodges

**Musical Response** [*seated*] “If I Have Been the Source of Pain”

MUSIC, PABLO SOSA;  
TRANSLATION, JANET W. MAY

**Invitation to the Observance of the Lenten Discipline**

Friends in Christ, this night begins our journey of reflection upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our brother, whose resurrection brings redemption to the whole world.

We begin this season of reflection by an honest acknowledgement of our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel. The ancient sign of ashes speaks of our mortality and the uncertainty of human life. This sign also marks the penitence of this community.

I invite you in the name of Jesus Christ,  
to practice a holy lent by self-examination and penitence,  
by prayer and fasting,  
by works of love, and  
by meditating on the Word of God.

Let us bow our hearts before God and confess our sin in prayer together.

**Prayer** [*responsive*]

**Kyrie Eleison**

Glory to God, #578

*Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,  
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?*

On this day, O God, we recognize our humanity,  
that which ties us to God and to each other.

We recognize that life is fragile and valuable  
and that we are called not for pain and punishment  
but rather for love and growth.

**Open us, O God,  
to a new way of being your people.**

*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?*

We remember the everyday violence that happens to people.  
We recognize our desire to interrupt the systems that enact this violence.

Let us seek to move past the punitive  
and to see each other as people.

**Humans,  
Children of God.**

Let us create a space of abundance and imagination,  
a space of liberation and life,  
for we are all beloved.

**We are ALL beloved.**

**Kyrie Eleison**

Glory to God, #578

*Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?*

We remember the things that weigh on our souls.  
We recognize the shame, the shock, the confusion that overwhelms and silences.

Let us seek to work through the struggle  
and to actively seek community.

**Curiosity,  
Conversation.**

Let us ask the questions that open us to the work,  
the work of freedom and faith.

For we are called to this.

**We are CALLED to this.**

**Amen.**

## Choir Anthem

“Touch Me with Ashes”  
Sanctuary Choir

MARTIN NORDMEYER

## Imposition of Ashes

*At this time, we invite you into a time of reflective prayer,  
and if you choose, to move forward for the imposition of ashes.*

*What is your intention for this season of Lent?*

*How will you practice being present to God,  
and seek out signs of God’s presence with you?*

## Prayer

### Hymn [stand]

“What Wondrous Love Is This”  
verses 1, 3-4

Glory to God, #215

## Benediction

†

### **Participating in the service:**

Katherine Williams, Director of Music

Rev. LeAnn Hodges

Rev. Deb Vaughn

Elder Kris Maldarelli, CRE

*Call To Worship excerpted from “An Ash Wednesday Liturgy”  
written by Tim Graves and posted on LiturgyBits.*

Thank you for  
worshiping with us!

[gpchurch.org/give](http://gpchurch.org/give)

