

ASH WEDNESDAY

The theme for our Lenten services this year is, "For God So Loved the World." Each week we will focus our prayers and concerns on a different continent, beginning this evening with North America and concluding with a Holy Wednesday service centered on hope for peace in the Holy Land and the Middle East.

PRELUDE Von Gott will ich nicht lassen Johann Michael Bach
From God I Shall Not Turn

WELCOME AND PREPARATION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Once again, as the season of Lent begins, we are summoned by a gracious and merciful God.

People: **We respond to God's steadfast love, calling us into solemn assembly.**

Leader: Let all the people gather for self-examination; let all bow in awe before the One who creates.

People: **We approach God in reverence and wonder, rejoicing in the invitation to holy places.**

Leader: Walk humbly before God in secret discipline, in prayer and fasting and giving.

People: **We seek the One who grants us life, upholding us with a willing spirit.**

OPENING PRAYER

***HYMN NO. 301** (blue hymnal) Lord Jesus, Think on Me *Southwell*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison) Psalm 51:1-17

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, I have sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass

judgement. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. You desire truth in the inward being: therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

(Silent confession)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Unison) Joel 2:12-13

"Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing." We believe this Good News. We receive God's forgiveness.

OLD TESTAMENT WORD Isaiah 58:1-12

(Silent reflection)

EPISTLE LESSON II Corinthians 5:20-6:10

(Silent reflection)

GOSPEL READING Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

(Silent reflection)

MEDITATIVE SONG "Sanctuary"

Lord prepare me, to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living, sanctuary for You.

COMMITMENT TO A NEW BEGINNING

We commit ourselves to make a needed change in our lives between now and Easter.

BURNING OF COMMITMENT SLIPS AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Please come forward to place your commitment slips in the bowl and receive ashes either on your forehead or hand.

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE WITH LORD'S PRAYER

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

Other: And also with you.

*BENEDICTION

You are invited to leave in silence.

Thank you to members of the youth group for helping in this Taize style of service. We hope this reflective time on the life of Jesus and our pattern after that life has been enriching and challenging for all.

TAIZE WORSHIP SERVICE

Taize worship is a service in which time is suspended. Do not be anxious about knowing what to do next or when. Silence is a central part of the service and is a gift to many in a busy world. Allow the silence to be a vehicle in which you can speak to God about what is on your heart; more importantly, allow God to speak to you.

A LENTEN SERIES will be offered each Wednesday evening beginning February 25 through April 1. We will gather at 5:45 p.m. for a simple meal of soup and bread, followed by a service of evening prayers in the sanctuary. This reflective time focuses on scripture, song and prayer as we prepare ourselves for Easter.

February 18, 2015

7:00 p.m.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

