

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

11 WASHINGTON STREET CUMBERLAND, MD 21502



*Ash*  
WEDNESDAY

MARCH 5, 2025

## GATHERING MUSIC

*IN A DEEP, UNBOUNDED DARKNESS*

JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

*Reflective Text:*

In a deep unbounded darkness  
Long before the first light shone,  
You, O God, beyond all merit  
Worked a wonder faith makes known:  
In your mercy, in your mercy,  
You embraced us as your own,  
Evermore and evermore.

Though our world is everchanging,  
You are constant, firm and sure  
Faithful to your covenant promise.  
Trusting you, we live secure:  
Singing praises, singing praises,  
Long as heart and breath endure,  
Evermore and evermore.

Joy transforms our lips to boasting  
Only in your matchless grace,  
Sending Christ to dwell among us,  
Word made flesh in time and space:  
Friend and Savior, Friend and Savior,  
Evermore and evermore.

God of Hagar, God of Sarah,  
God of nomad Abraham;  
God of Miryam, God of Moses,  
Fiery pillar, great I AM:  
Lead us homeward, lead us homeward,  
To the love-feast on the Lamb,  
Evermore and evermore.

“DIVINUM MYSTERIUM”

## INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENT

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

**For we know our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us.**

Create in us a clean heart, O God, and make us a new creation.

**Restore to us the joy of your salvation.**

Then we will teach sinners your way and all creation will return to you.

**O Lord, open our lips, and our mouths will declare your praise! Let us worship God!**

1 We can - not mea - sure how you heal or  
2 The pain that will not go a - way, the  
3 So some have come who need your help and  
an - swer ev - ery suf - ferer's prayer, yet  
guilt that clings from things long past, the  
some have come to make a - mends, as  
we be - lieve your grace re - sponds where  
fear of what the fu - ture holds, are  
hands which shaped and saved the world are  
faith and doubt u - nite to care. Your  
pres - ent as if meant to last. But  
pres - ent in the touch of friends. Lord,  
hands, though blood - ied on the cross, sur -  
pres - ent too is love which tends the  
let your Spir - it meet us here to  
vive to hold and heal and warn, to  
hurt we nev - er hoped to find, the  
mend the bod - y, mind, and soul, to  
car - ry all through death to life and  
pri - vate ag - o - nies in - side, the  
dis - en - tan - gle peace from pain, and  
cra - dle chil - dren yet un - born.  
mem - o - ries that haunt the mind.  
make your bro - ken peo - ple whole.

## LITANY OF CONFESSION

You have heard the trumpets of Zion, and know that the day of the Lord is drawing near. But even now, O God, you have called us to return to you, for you are slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

**Help us choose the path that leads to repentance.**

God, all too often we have practiced our piety in public, basking in the glory of our fellow human beings. Remind us to turn our faces toward you, knowing that our reward for faithfulness is in heaven.

**Help us choose the path that leads to repentance.**

We have stored up treasures on earth; trinkets that will mean nothing when judgment comes. Tonight, we pause, acknowledging that we are but dust, and one day to dust we will return.

**Help us choose the path that leads to repentance.**

We confess we have often run from our own mortality, regardless of the cost. Help us to run toward you. Give us courage to remember how fleeting this life is, and that we must therefore devote our all to you.

**Help us choose the path that leads to repentance.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

ANTHEM

MY SHEPHERD WILL SUPPLY MY NEED

THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

My shepherd will supply my need; Jehovah is his name.  
In pastures fresh he makes me feed, beside the living stream.  
He brings my wandering spirit back when I forsake his ways,  
He leads me, for his mercy's sake, in paths of truth and grace.

When I walk through the shades of death thy presence is my stay;  
One word of thy supporting breath drives all my fears away.  
Thy hand in sight of all my foes, doth still my table spread;  
My cup with blessings overflows; thine oil anoints my head.

The sure provisions of my God attend me all my days;  
O may thy house be my abode and all my work be praise  
There would I find a settled rest, while others go and come;  
No more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home

SCRIPTURE

2 CORINTHIANS 5-20-6:10

REFLECTION

"BEING HUMAN"

REV. ALISON PETERS

BLESSING OF ASHES

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

You may receive ashes on your forehead or your hand, please let the pastor know which you prefer.)

SONG DURING IMPOSITION #470

THERE IS A LONGING IN OUR HEARTS

"LONGING"

Refrain Dm All Gm C F  
Musical notation for the first line of the song.

There is a long-ing in our hearts, O Lord, for  
you to re-veal your-self to us.

There is a long-ing in our hearts for love we  
on-ly find in you, our God.

on-ly find in you, our God. (hold last time) FINE

Musical notation for the second line of the song.

- 1 For jus-tice, for free-dom, for mer-cy:
- 2 For wis-dom, for cour-age, for com-fort:
- 3 For heal-ing, for whole-ness, for new life:
- 4 Lord save us, take pit-y, Light in our

Musical notation for the third line of the song.

hear our prayer. In sor-row, in grief:  
hear our prayer. In weak-ness, in fear:  
hear our prayer. In sick-ness, in death:  
dark-ness. We call you; we wait:

to Keirain  
Musical notation for the fourth line of the song.

be near; hear our prayer, O God.

PRAYER FOR THE NIGHT

1 Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and  
 2 As you with Sa - tan did con - tend and did the vic - tory  
 3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas - sion -  
 4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be

pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.  
 win, O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con - quer sin.  
 tide, yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.  
 past, an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at - tain at last.

## SENDING AND BENEDICTION

MARCH 5, 2025  
 ASH WEDNESDAY



*Turning our hearts to God.*

ASH WEDNESDAY BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Ash Wednesday observances.

Wednesday	Isaiah 58:1-12	The fast that God wants
	Psalms 51:1-17	A prayer for forgiveness
	2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10	Messengers of Christ
	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21	The practice of faith

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

*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? Isaiah 58:6 (NRSV)*

PRAYERS AND BLESSING**A Prayer for Ash Wednesday:**

Merciful God, forgive us and renew us with your constant love that we may care for others and faithfully follow Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**Mealtime Prayer:**

God gives us water. God gives us bread. Let us give thanks for now being fed. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

**A Blessing to Give:**

May God give you a clean heart and a new and right spirit. (Psalm 51:10)

MARCH 5, 2025

HYMN FOR ASH  
WEDNESDAY

*Return to God*

ASH WEDNESDAY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What story can you tell about someone you know who is a humble servant?
- When have you done something that pleases you and that needed no reward or acknowledgement from others?

DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Matthew 6:1-6 and Isaiah 58:1-12.

In Matthew 6, Jesus discusses the three faith practices most associated with Lent. They include prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Jesus lifts up each practice as something to be done to enjoy the heavenly treasure of your relationship with God, rather than being praised by others. What others do not see, God sees. Authentic and meaningful faith practices are not to be done for show and the attention of others. Isaiah 58 builds on the topic of fasting. Isaiah changes the fasting of self-neglect for a divine reward into a fast that looks like the humble care of others. Whether it's the voice of Jesus in Matthew or the voice of the prophet Isaiah, the heart of the Christian religion is a love of God that needs no earthly reward and the love of neighbor that is its own reward.

*Discuss:* What Christian faith practice will you focus on during Lent?

*Pray:* Almighty God, you call us to a life that is humble, honest, and loving; cleanse our hearts to live faithfully through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Ash Wednesday Bible Readings and theme for today, how can you help lighten someone's worries or burdens?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

To mark the beginning of Lent, consider setting aside one day this week to "unplug" from technology and luxuries. Choose not to watch TV or use computers and other devices for leisure purposes. Eat simple foods and drink only water. Have a time of silence on that day. Sit quietly, light a candle, and reflect on your relationship with God.

*Pray:* God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you. Amen. (Psalm 51:10)