



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

DALTON, GEORGIA EST. 1847



Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

THE SEASON OF LENT

The season of Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days — like the flood of Genesis, Moses' sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah's call to Ninevah to repent and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness. (The Sundays in Lent are not counted in this reckoning of the time between Ash Wednesday and Easter, as every Lord's Day is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.)

In the early church, Lent was a time of preparation for the celebration of baptism at the Easter Vigil. In many communities of faith it remains a time to equip and nurture candidates for baptism and confirmation and to reflect deeply on the theme of baptismal discipleship.

- From the PC(USA) office of theology and worship

A TIME TO TURN

The Lenten journey from the ashes of death to resurrected life begins on the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, which signifies a time to turn around, to change directions, to repent. This first day of Lent reminds us that unless we are willing to die to our old selves, we cannot be raised to new life with Christ. The first step of this journey calls us to acknowledge and confront our mortality, individually and corporately. In many traditions, this is symbolized through the imposition of ashes — placing a cross on one's forehead. During the imposition of ashes the words: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19) are repeated again and again. We are to remember that we are but temporary creatures, always on the edge of death. On Ash Wednesday, we begin our Lenten trek through the desert toward Easter. Ashes on the forehead is a sign of our humanity and a reminder of our mortality. Lent is not a matter of being good, and wearing ashes is not to show off one's faith.

The ashes are a reminder to us and our communities of our finite creatureliness. The ashes we wear on our Lenten journey symbolize the dust and broken debris of our lives as well as the reality that eventually each of us will die. Trusting in the "accomplished fact" of Christ's resurrection, however, we listen for the Word of God in the time-honored stories of the church's Lenten journey. We follow Jesus into the wilderness, resist temptation, fast, and proceed "on the way" to Jerusalem and the cross. Our Lenten journey is one of metanoia ("turning around"), of changing directions from self-serving toward the self-giving way of the cross.

- *Companion to the Book of Common Worship* (Geneva Press, 2003, 109-110)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

THE GREETING

At the sound of the bells, please prepare your heart and mind for worship.

INTROIT

Spirit of the Living God

Daniel Iverson
(1890-1977)

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me; mold me; fill me; use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever present help in times of trouble.

Therefore we will not fear
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though the waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
God's love endures forever.

***UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Almighty God, through love you have made us, and for love you call us to repentance. Grant that we who seek to mend our sinful ways may find strength in your compassion and forgiveness. Restore to us the joy of your salvation; give us your Holy Spirit that we may serve you with willing hearts, bearing witness to your abundant mercy in all the world; through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

***HYMN 423**

Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God

Saraday

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(A time of silent prayer and meditation.)

Merciful God, whose ways are good and true, we confess that we have not lived as Christ has called us to live. We have shut our eyes to evils our world allows. We have sealed our ears from the cries of the suffering whose pain we abide. We have clung to the hostility we harbor against one another and hardened our hearts to the creative power of love.

The Call to Worship is from Psalm 46.

Hymn 423 Note:
The text here comes from Psalm 51:10–12, three verses that illustrate the pattern of parallels often found in Hebrew poetry. The first verse here centers on positive actions, the second on avoidance of negative actions, and the third on providing an improved spiritual condition.

*Where you see this notation, please rise in body or in spirit.

Open our eyes to see injustice in our world. Give us courage to resist the powers that oppress the poor. Open our ears to hear the cry of the needy. Teach us generosity for sharing the abundance of your creation. Open our minds to imagine an end to human strife. Grant us wisdom to pursue the ways of peace. Open our hearts to love our neighbors and our enemies near and far. Give us desire to embody the compassion of Christ. For the sake of the world, in the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

KYRIE

Lord, Have Mercy Upon Us

Kyrie Eleison



Lord, have mer - cy up - on us; Christ, have mer - cy up -



on us; Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

RESPONSE OF PRAISE

What Wondrous Love Is This

Wondrous Love

**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 dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul.**

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

NRSVUE

¹ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—
² a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread upon the mountains,
a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
nor will be again after them
in ages to come.

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¹² Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the Lord your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting from punishment.
¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for the Lord your God?
¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶ gather the people.
Consecrate the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her canopy.
¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar,
let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep.
Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"

SCRIPTURE LESSON

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

NRSVUE

...we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1} As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ² For he says,
"At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! ³ We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷ truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸ in honor and

dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true,⁹ as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed,¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Notre Père (The Lord's Prayer)

Maurice Duruflé

(1902-1986)

*Notre Père qui es aux cieux,
que ton nom soit sanctifié,
que ton regne vienne,
que ta volonté soit faite
sur la terre comme au ciel.
Donne nous aujourd'hui notre pain de ce jour,
pardonne-nous nos offenses
comme nous pardonnons aussi
à ceux qui nous ont offensés,
et ne nous soumets pas à la tentation,
mais délivre-nous du mal.*

Translation
*Our Father, who art in heav'n
Hallow'd be thy name
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heav'n.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive
Those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 6: 1-21

NRSVUE

¹“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵ “And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ “Pray, then, in this way:

Our Father in heaven,

may your name be revered as holy.

¹⁰ May your kingdom come.

May your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

¹⁴ “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

¹⁶ “And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“In the Secret Place, I Will Sing”

Rev. Nicole Jiskoot

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

*HYMN 215

What Wondrous Love Is This

Wondrous Love

Stanzas 2-4

INVITATION TO OBSERVE A HOLY LENT

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, eternal God, creator and ruler of the universe. Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth, breathed into us the breath of life, and set us in your world to love and serve you. 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 everlasting life.

Hymn 215 Note:

With its ballad-like repetitions before and after each stanza's central narrative lines, this meditative text needs performance in order to be effective. Its haunting melody proves the means of convincing us that the only adequate response to “wondrous love” is to “sing on.”

When we reject your love and ignore your wisdom, you do not reject us. You love us still and call us to turn again to you in obedience and love. Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with the celestial choirs and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:

O Lamb of God

Land of Rest

(All sing together)

**O Lamb of God, you take away
the sins of the world;
have mercy on us, Lamb of God
and grant us your peace.**

You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son. Out of your great love for the world, you sent Jesus among us to set us free from the tyranny of evil. He lived as one of us, sharing our joys and sorrows. By his dying and rising, he releases us from bondage to sin and frees us from the dominion of death.

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit unite us with the living Christ and with all who are baptized in his name, that we may be one in ministry in every place. As this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the body of Christ in the world.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION & THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

We invite you to come forward for communion via the left aisle. Communion is served by intinction. Take a piece of bread held by one elder, dip it in the cup held by another, and then, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Gluten-free elements are available. Once you have taken communion, continue to the right side to receive the imposition of ashes. Then return to your seat via the right aisle.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*HYMN 435

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

In Babilone

Hymn 435 Note:
These stanzas, excerpted from quite a few more, offer a reminder that the model for our dealings with others should be God's generosity rather than limited human tolerance. The text is effectively set to a broad and sturdy Dutch folk melody, probably from the 17th century.

*CHARGE & BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

God Be with You Till We Meet Again

Traditional

**God be with you till we meet again;
By His counsels guide, uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.**

*POSTLUDE

Announcements

- Please join us for the **Second Sunday Fellowship Lunch** on Sunday, March 9, in Hollis Hall, immediately following Worship. Please RSVP to the church office if you'd like to attend. After lunch, stay for the Connection Team meeting and see how you can help.
- **“Pray without ceasing.”** This biblical command is our collective commitment during Lent. Please join us by taking one day each week to lift prayers for those in need. Resources are available in the Commons or by email to office@firstpresdalton.org.
- This year we invite you to give to **“One Great Hour of Sharing”**—a denomination-wide mission effort that raises money for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, hunger programs, and cooperative development work with communities experiencing poverty around the world. Make a gift through the website or leave a check with “One Great Hour of Sharing” in the memo line. We will receive collections for this special offering through Easter.
- On Sunday, March 23, our church will recognize **Fred Rogers’ birthday** and celebrate his lifetime of being a good and loving neighbor to all. As part of this celebration the Missions Team will collect children’s books to donate to the Friendship House. Books should be appropriate for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. You can bring your donations to the church and leave them in a designated bin by the Missions board or you can bring them with you on March 23 and participate in a special collection during the Worship service. P.S. Channel your inner Mr. Rogers by wearing your favorite cardigan and tennis shoes on the 23rd.

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Upcoming Events

Wednesday, March 5

Ash Wednesday Worship

5:30 p.m.

Choir Rehearsal

6:00-8:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 6

Presbyterians at the Pub

5:00 p.m.

Knitting Group

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Friday, March 7

Grateful Heart AA Mtg

8:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 9

Sunday School

9:15 a.m.

Fellowship

10:00 a.m.

Worship

10:30 a.m.

Second Sunday

Fellowship Lunch

11:30 a.m.

Connection Team

Meeting

12:30 p.m.

Monday, March 10

Morning Prayers

11:00 a.m.

The Lunch Bunch

11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 11

Grateful Heart AA Mtg

8:00 p.m.

10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, March 12

Worship Team Meeting

5:30 p.m.

Choir Rehearsal

6:00-8:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 13

Knitting Group

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Friday, March 14

Grateful Heart AA Mtg

8:00 p.m.

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

WORSHIP

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Flowers
3/5	Rev. Nicole Jiskoot	Annelle Scott & Peggy Rollins	Kathryn Sellers
3/9	Alice Ensley	The Hendrix Family	Kaye Clark
3/16	James Hoskins	TBD	Wedding Flowers

CHILDREN

Date	Nursery	Joy Makers	Faith Builders
3/9	Laura Goins	Laura Goins & Leanna Granillo	Eric Haugen & Jeff Granillo
3/16	Alice Ensley	Alice Ensley & Susan Bisson	Jeane Jones & Kayte Crocker

MONTHLY

Communion (March 5 - Ash Wednesday)		Congregational Care		Little Free Pantry Pal	
Prep	Kathryn Sellers	March	Priscilla Brown	March	Margaret Venable
Servers	Rev. Nicole Jiskoot, Alice Ensley and Margaret Venable	April	Peggy Rollins	April	Jean Lowrey & Carol Houston
Communion (April 6)					
Prep	Margaret Venable				
Servers	Rev. Nicole Jiskoot, Greg & Kim Epps and Leanna Granillo				

PRAYERS

For Healing and Comfort for our Members:

Verutzka Soza, who continues to recover from outpatient surgery;
Jenny Crawford, who has been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease;
Bob Hubbs, who will be receiving some long-awaited medical treatment;
Charles Allgood, as he battles lung cancer;

Ongoing Concerns for our Members:

Nancy Rhine, in assisted living located near her daughter;
Stan Crawford, multiple health challenges including spinal stenosis;

For Friends of First Presbyterian, Dalton

The congregation of the Pacific Palisades Presbyterian Church in California, who suffered the loss of their entire church campus during the recent wildfires;
Culver City Presbyterian Church, as they open their doors and share their facilities with the Pacific Palisades Church so that services can continue;
Pam Williams, friend of Alice Ensley, Mary Ellen Gurley, and Berrien Long, who has been diagnosed with glioblastoma and is beginning treatment;
Those affected by the raging fires in Southern California, may God bring rain to quench the earth and bring urgent relief to all who have lost their homes and loved ones, especially those most vulnerable of being overlooked;
For the family and friends of Patsy Burns, a beloved friend of many in our congregation, as all mourn her passing;
Dana Easley, friend of Sherri Stafford and many in our congregation, for unspoken prayers - may God bless her and keep her in his tender care;
For Linda Leslie, who is being treated for cancer, for *Mark A. Spivey*, who suffered a fall and a stroke, and for *Emily Bringardner*, who is recovering from hip surgery and suffers from Parkinson's Disease, all of whom are friends and family of Sue Spivey and Kathy Bridges;
Jerry, friend of Pam Partain, who is undergoing chemotherapy;
Becky Hansberry, daughter of Kaye Clark, who is receiving chemotherapy treatment for lung cancer at Emory in Atlanta.
Those affected by Hurricane Helene and Milton, especially the friends, families, and loved ones who are close to our hearts, as well as those whom we cannot name, but whose needs are known well by God;
Paula Morrow, friend of Sarah McCown and of the church, whose Leukemia has relapsed and who is awaiting a plan for a bone marrow transplant;
Martha Bracey Henson, cousin of Mary Hubbs, who continues to receive treatment for a brain tumor;
The peace of Israel and Palestine and the well-being of Ukraine;
The families of victims of substance abuse;
Arden Brown, son of Amanda and Chris Brown, as they seek a cure for DMD;
Caregivers and aging parents.

Praises and Continuing Prayers!

Janice Sims, for a successful cataract surgery and a great recovery;
Kathy Householder, friend of Debbie and Mary Dennard, who is home from Mexico and doing well.



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