

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 9, 2011

7:00 p.m.



The Gathering -- In Silence

+Call to Worship

To come into your presence, O God,
is a humbling experience.

We come aware of our faults, ready to be renewed.

To come into your presence, O God,
is a learning experience.

**We come aware of our ignorance,
eager to receive new truth.**

To come into your presence, O God,
is a challenging experience.

**We come aware of the crying needs of our city
and world, ready to serve the downtrodden
and the exploited.**

To come into your presence, O God,
is a transforming experience.

**We come aware of your eternal goodness,
ready to witness to your glorious presence in
Jesus Christ.**

+Hymn "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days" p. 269

Old Testament Reading Joel 2:12-17 BB p. 847 RB p. 798

Prayer of Confession

Holy and merciful God, we confess to you, and to one another,
in communion with all the saints, that we have sinned through our own
fault in thought, word, and deed; in what we have done and in what
we have failed to do.

**We have not loved you with all our heart, soul,
mind and strength.**

We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We have not loved one another as Christ has loved us.

We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

**We confess to you, O God, our past unfaithfulness:
the pride, hypocrisy and willfulness of our lives.**

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

**We confess our greed, our preoccupation with worldly
goods and comforts, and our envy of others.**

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

**We confess our blindness to human need and suffering,
our indifference to injustice and cruelty, our misuse and
pollution of creation, and our lack of concern for the
generations to come.**

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

**We confess our mean spirits, our impatience,
our lack of generosity.**

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

**We confess our negligence in prayer and worship, and
our failure to commit to the faith we profess.**

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Forgive us, for we have sinned against you.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy on our souls.

The Lord's Prayer

+Psalter Psalm 51 p. 785, response 2

Special Music "In Christ Alone" Choir

Scripture Lesson Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 BB p. 5 RB p. 4

Meditation Rev. Westbrook

Silent Reflection

Hymn (seated) "Amazing Grace" p. 378

Ritual of Repentance

(Come forward, exiting your row to the left, leaving your paper of sins inside the bag on the left, receiving the imposition of ashes in the center, receiving the nail on the right, then returning by the side aisle to your seat. You are invited to pray at the altar.)

+Blessing

+Going Back Into the World



Ash Wednesday: A Day of Atonement

The spirit of Ash Wednesday is most solemn, close to that of the Jewish Day of Atonement. The suggested color is black, the color of ashes and desolation. The mood is penitence and reflection on the quality of our faith and life.

Ashes are an extraordinarily rich symbol, rooted in ancient customs and practices. Ashes, in a Jewish and Christian context, suggest judgment and God's condemnation of sin and of our repentance. We are reminded forcefully of the words of the committal said in the burial service, "...dust thou art; to dust thou shalt return." For one day those words will be said over us. Ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. They were once used as a cleansing agent in the absence of soap, and on Ash Wednesday the ashes have sometimes been understood as a penitential substitute for water as a sign of baptism.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:9



Saint Matthias United Methodist Church
426 Deacon Road, Fredericksburg, VA. 22405
540/373-8759 www.stmatthiasumc.org

