

## The Meaning of Lent

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Lent is the forty day period (not including Sundays) beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending with the Saturday before Easter Sunday. In the year 604, Pope Gregory I described Lent as “the spiritual tithing of the year.” We are reminded of Christ's forty day fast before his temptation in the desert, and the forty hours he spent in the tomb before rising Easter morning.

The focus of Lent is spiritual renewal in the pattern of Christ. We seek renewal by cooperating with God's grace in practices that both add and subtract from our routine lives. The most notable Lenten practices are ancient: prayer, fasting and the giving of alms. Lent is often also marked by special study, instruction and holy reading.

In Lent, we get a clean start, seek the Spirit, and change our minds and our ways. Reminded of our mortality at the outset on Ash Wednesday, we hope with an honest openness for renewal, and look to participate in the resurrection of Jesus on Easter.

## Portage Lake United Church

Presbyterian Church (USA) & United Church of Christ



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Rooted in the Trinity. Growing in God's Word.  
Branching out to those in need. Nourished by many waters.

# Ash Wednesday

March 02, 2022 6:30 p.m.



### GATHERING

Welcome and Distribution of Dry Palms

Call to Worship

Let us worship God.

God sent Christ into the world, not to condemn the world,  
but that the world might be saved through him.

**God's love endures forever.**

God is our refuge and strength,

**a present help in 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.**

Opening Prayer

Hymn: "Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights"

#129

### DRY PALMS BURNT

Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 58:1-12

Prayer of Confession

**We confess to you, Lord, what we are:**

**we are not the people we like others to think we are;**

**we are afraid to admit even to ourselves**

**what lies in the depths of our souls.**

**But we do not want to hide our true selves from you.**

**We believe that you know us as we are, and yet you love us.**

**Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge;**

**teach us to respect ourselves for your sake;**

**give us courage to put our trust in your leading and power.**

**We confess to you, Lord, the unrest of the world,**

**to which we contribute and in which we share.**

**Forgive us that so many of us are indifferent**

**to the needs of others.**

**Forgive our reliance on weapons of terror,**

**our discrimination against people of different races,**

**and our preoccupation with material standards.**

**And forgive us Christians for being so unsure of your good news,**

**and so unready to tell it.**

**Raise us out of the paralysis of guilt,**

**into the freedom and energy of forgiven people.**

**And for those who through long habit**

**find forgiveness hard to accept,**

**we ask you to break their bondage and set them free.**

**Through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.**

Palms Collected and Burned

### ASHES PREPARED

Responsive Psalm

Psalm 51

Hymn:

"Shine on Me"

#51

Offering of the Ashes

**Creator God, all that exists is yours.**

**You despise nothing you have made.**

**So we offer you even these: our broken palms.**

**Once green and bright, waved in celebration;**

**now they are dry, burnt, and reduced to dust.**

**Do what you do, O God, and accept these gifts from your creation**

**and use them in your holy, surprising, and redeeming work.**

**Accept these palms as you accept us—**

**dry and thirsting for your redeeming grace.**

**Amen.**

Meditation

### ASHES IMPARTED

Gospel

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

Call to an Observance of a Holy Lent

Thanksgiving over the Ashes

Imposition of Ashes

Departing Hymn:

"Friends in Faith"

#135

Charge and Benediction

Responsive Psalm

Psalm 51

Responsive Psalm

Psalm 51

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, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,**

so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless when you pass judgment.

**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.

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.**

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**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,  
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.

**Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;  
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,**

Then you will delight in right sacrifices,  
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;  
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

**Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.**

Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,  
God of my salvation,  
**and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.**

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