



February 22, 2023
12:30 and 7:00 p.m.
Ash Wednesday

First Presbyterian
Church of Athens

GATHERING

Prelude

Forty Days and Forty Nights

C.P.E. Bach

Call to Worship

(adapted from Lavon Bayler's *Gathered by Love* and *Taught By Love*)

Welcome to a season of self-examination; this is a time for reconciliation with God and neighbor.

Welcome together, elders and children, to meet God, longing for the abundant mercy of our Creator.

This is a time for building spiritual disciplines, to become disciples.

We seek to know God's presence here and everywhere. We seek to follow in the steps of Jesus.

Let the wisdom of God guide you in truth. Prepare yourself for a period of testing. Be open to the grace that enables your growth.

We seek the steadfast love of God.

*Hymn

Sunday's Palms Are Wednesdays Ashes

BEACH SPRING

1. Sun-day's palms are Wednes-day's ash - es as an - oth - er Lent be - gins; thus we
2. We have failed to love our neigh - bors, their of - fenc - es to for - give, have not
3. We are hast - y to judge oth - ers, blind to proof of hu - man need; and our

kneel be - fore our Mak - er in con - tri - tion for our sins. We have
lis - tened to their troub - les, nor have cared just how they live, we are
lack of un - der stand - ing dem - on - strates our in - ner greed; we have

marred bap - tis - mal pledg - es, in re - bel - lion gone a - stray; now, re -
jeal - ous, proud, im - pa - tient, lov - ing o - ver - much our things; may the
wast - ed earth's re - sourc - es; want and suf - fering we've ig - nored; come and

turn - ing seek for - give - ness; grant us par - don, God, this day!
yield - ing of our fail - ings be our Len - ten of - fer - ings.
cleanse us, then re - store us; make new hearts with - in us, Lord!

*Those who are able may stand.

*Prayer of Confession

God who still speaks, we confess that we often act as if you have already said all you will say.
Instead of approaching you like curious children,

we approach you as if we already know everything. We see our adult faith as greatest and the children's faith as the least.

Instead of approaching you with childlike openness,

we tighten the yoke around our faith.

Instead of noticing as children do where you are naked, thirsty, hungry, imprisoned, or visiting as a stranger,

we tighten the bonds of injustice.

Help us change and become like children:

Help us ask the hard questions.

Help us listen for your voice, which is still speaking.

Help us see Jesus in others.

Help us loosen the bonds of injustice.

Prepare us for these forty days by helping us change to be like children again. Amen.

*Responsive Assurance of Forgiveness (Isaiah 58:10-12)

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places,

and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden,

like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

We are forgiven in Jesus Christ, who repairs the breach between us and God, between us and neighbor.

WORD

Congregational Prayer for Illumination



Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing. Lord, send your Spir-it in this place.



Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing. Send us love; send us power; send us grace.

Scripture

First Reading: Isaiah 58:1-12, page 674

7:00 p.m. Anthem

Wash Me Thoroughly

David Halls

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and forgive me all my sin.
For I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me.

Second Reading: Matthew 18:1-9, page 897

Sermon

A Childlike Faith

The Rev. Leigh Bonner

Invitation to Observe a Holy Lent

***Psalm 51**

DUNDEE

1. Have mer - cy Lord, ac - cord - ing to the mea - sure of your love;
2. The fail - ings of my deeds and thoughts are ev - er in my sight;
3. In - to my se - cret heart send truth, let wis - dom in me grow;
4. A clean and up - right heart, O Lord, ex - change for mine of stone;
5. A con - trite heart is your de - sire, my of - fer - ing, the same;

blot out my sin, and from my heart all wick - ed - ness re - move.
re - lease me from the path of death, and set my course a - right.
O wash the e - vil from my hands, and make me pure as snow.
your Ho - ly Spir - it meld with mine, and leave me not a - lone.
my lips un - latch, my mouth en - gage your prais - es to pro - claim.

Imposition of Ashes

Those who wish may come forward to receive the imposition of ashes. One of the ministers will mark your forehead with ashes as a reminder that all of us will someday die, and as a sign that we trust in God's grace in Jesus Christ.

Prayer for our Lenten Journey *Blessing the Dust: A Blessing for Ash Wednesday* by Jan Richardson

All those days
you felt like dust,
like dirt,
as if all you had to do
was turn your face
toward the wind
and be scattered
to the four corners

or swept away
by the smallest breath
as insubstantial—

Did you not know
what the Holy One
can do with dust?

This is the day
we freely say
we are scorched.

This is the hour
we are marked
by what has made it
through the burning.

This is the moment
we ask for the blessing
that lives within
the ancient ashes,
that makes its home
inside the soil of
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked
not for sorrow.
And let us be marked
not for shame.
Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are

but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made,
and the stars that blaze
in our bones,
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.

EUCCHARIST

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer

Hymnal, p. 16

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.

Breaking of the Bread and Giving of the Cup

Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion

SENDING

***Hymn 77**

Forty Days and Forty Nights

AUS DER TIEFE RUFE ICH

***Charge and Blessing**

All depart in silence.

Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes



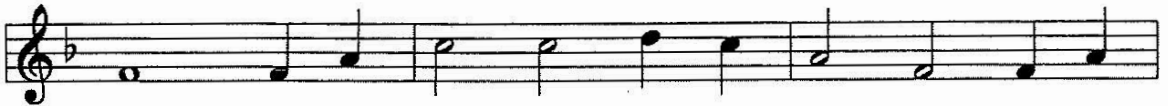
1. *Sun-day's palms are Wednes-day's ash - es as an -
2. We have failed to love our neigh - bors, their of -
3. We are hast - y to judge oth - ers, blind to



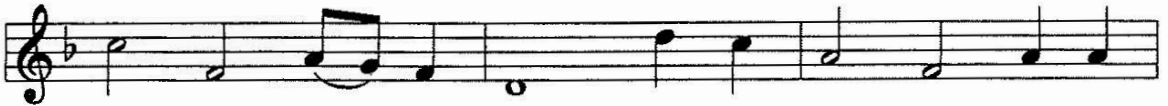
oth - er Lent be - gins; thus we kneel be - fore our
fenc - es to for - give, have not lis - tened to their.
proof of hu - man need; and our lack of un - der -



Mak - er in con - tri - tion for our
trou - bles, nor have cared just how they
stand - ing dem - on - strates our in - ner



sins. We have marred bap - tis - mal pledg - es, in re -
live, we are jeal - ous, proud, im - pa - tient, lov - ing
greed; we have wast - ed earth's re - sourc - es; want and



bel - lion gone a - stray; now, re - turn - ing, seek for -
o - ver - much our things; may the yield - ing of our
suf - fering we've ig - nored; come and cleanse us, then re -



give - ness; grant us par - don, God, this day!
fail - ings be our Len - ten of - fer - ings.
store us; make new hearts with - in us, Lord!

**The first line of the hymn recalls the custom of burning remaining palm leaves of the previous year to form the ashes for this observance.*

WORDS: Rae E. Whitney
MUSIC: Attr. to B. F. White

BEACH SPRING
87.87 D

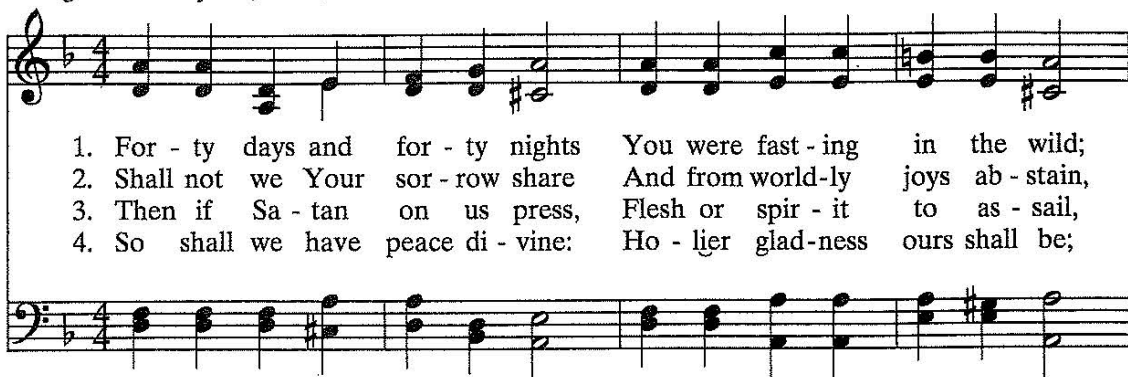
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Forty Days and Forty Nights

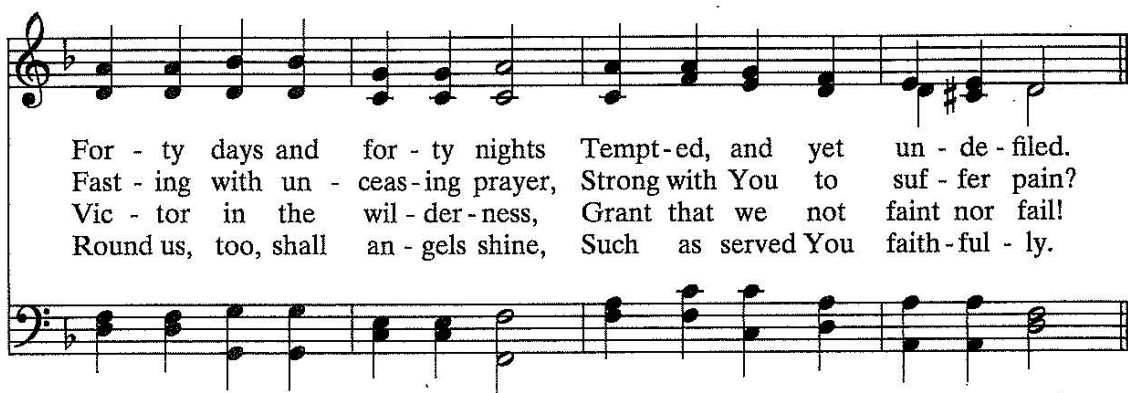
AUS DER TIEFE RUFE ICH 7.7.7.7

George Hunt Smyttan, 1856; alt.

Attr. Martin Herbst, 1676



1. For - ty days and for - ty nights You were fast - ing in the wild;
 2. Shall not we Your sor - row share And from world - ly joys ab - stain,
 3. Then if Sa - tan on us press, Flesh or spir - it to as - sail,
 4. So shall we have peace di - vine: Ho - lier glad - ness ours shall be;



For - ty days and for - ty nights Tempt - ed, and yet un - de - filed.
 Fast - ing with un - ceas - ing prayer, Strong with You to suf - fer pain?
 Vic - tor in the wil - der - ness, Grant that we not faint nor fail!
 Round us, too, shall an - gels shine, Such as served You faith - ful - ly.

5. Keep, O keep us, Savior dear,
 Ever constant by Your side;
 That with You we may appear
 At the eternal Eastertide.

♩=50-54