

**Mount Olive Presbyterian Church**  
**Organized 1874**  
**Mount Olive, North Carolina**



ASH WEDNESDAY

Mount Olive Presbyterian Church  
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# A Service of Worship for Ash Wednesday

February 14, 2023,

7 pm

## WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Come into the light!

**People: We know the darkness better. The Light frightens us.**

Leader: Come into the presence of Love.

**People: Our fears and doubts overwhelm us. We feel unable to move.**

Leader: Come let God's love wash away your sorrow.

**People: Please help us. We are filled with fear and sorrow. Bring us healing.  
Amen.**

HYMN

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

#81 (Blue)

### CALL TO CONFESSION (Romans 5:8, Hebrews 4:16)

The proof of God's amazing love is this: While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Because we have faith in him, we dare to approach God with confidence. In faith and penitence, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions.

**People: Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity, and cleanse us from our sin! For we know our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us.**

Leader: Against you, you only, have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

**People:** Hide your face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities.

**Leader:** Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

**People:** Cast us not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from us.

**Leader:** Restore to us the joy of your salvation, and uphold us with a willing spirit.

**People:** For you will not delight in sacrifice, or we would give it;

**Leader:** you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

**People:** Our sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

## SILENT CONFESSION

## ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

**Leader:** Jesus knows the wilderness of our need.

Because he's been there before, he will not hesitate to go there to find us.

Because he's been there before, he can lead us out.

In the name of Jesus, we are found and forgiven

**People:** Glory to God, Amen.

## WE HEAR AND RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

(pew Bible pages 684,685)

DEVOTIONAL READING

Invitation To The Observance of Lenten Discipline

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

The early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

To make a right beginning of repentance, let us receive this sign as a mark of our mortal nature.

### THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

### IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*During this time you are invited to come forward to receive ashes on your forehead in the shape of a cross. Then return to your seat and spend some time in quiet reflection.*

HYMN

What Wondrous Love Is This

#85 (Blue)

### SENT TO SERVE AS GOD'S PEOPLE

#### BENEDICTION

Though the night is dark, the Light of the world goes before you. God guides your steps and surrounds your life. Go in peace, ready to serve the One who has always loved you. Amen.

(all depart in silence)