

Imposition of Ashes

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

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Prayer (unison)

God of compassion, through your Son Jesus Christ you reconciled your people to yourself. Following his example of prayer and fasting, may we obey you with willing hearts and serve one another in holy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

* **Hymn 223**

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Blessing and Charge (responsive)

May the God of peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being – spirit, soul, and body – free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



Ash Wednesday

March 5, 2025 at 12:30 pm
Paw Creek Presbyterian Church
Paw Creek, North Carolina

Greeting (from Psalm 46 - responsive)

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.

* **Hymn 418**

Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling

Prayer (unison)

Almighty God, you despise nothing you have made and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts. As we truly repent of our sins and acknowledge our brokenness, may we obtain from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness. Through your Son, Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Scripture

Isaiah 58: 6-12

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, 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.

Homily

Rev. Rhonda McClain

Invitation to the Observance of a Holy Lent

Friends in Christ, every year at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life in the paschal mystery.

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes, acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marks the penitence of the community of Christ's disciples.

We are invited, therefore, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of love, and by reading and meditating on the Word of God.

Let us bow before God, our Creator and Redeemer, and confess our sin, with the words of the Psalmist:

Psalm 51 (responsive)

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,

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.

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.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.