

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PORTSMOUTH, VA**  
**515 Court Street, Portsmouth, Virginia**  
**Order of Worship for Ash Wednesday**  
**March 5, 2025**  
**12:00 p.m.**



Gathering in Silence

\*Call to Worship

Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world,  
**but in order that the world might be saved through Him.**

Hymn 175

“Seek Ye First”

\*The Prayer of Confession

Psalm 51:1-17

**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness;  
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.  
Wash me through and through from my wickedness  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
For I know my transgressions, my sin is ever before me.**

**Against you only have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight.  
And so you are justified when you speak  
and upright in your judgment.  
Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,  
a sinner from my mother’s womb.  
For behold, you look for truth deep within me,  
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.**

**Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;  
wash me, and I shall be brighter than snow.  
Make me hear of joy and gladness,  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.  
Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.**

**Cast me not from your presence  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Give me the joy of your saving help again  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.  
I shall teach your ways to the wicked,  
and sinners shall return to you.**

**Deliver me from death, O God,  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,  
O God of my salvation. Open my lips, O Lord,  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.  
Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,  
but you take no delight in burnt offering.**

\*Congregational participation is in bold type.

**The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

Reconciliation and Commendation

The Almighty and Merciful God, source of our salvation in Christ, who desires not the death of a sinner but rather that we turn from wickedness and live, accepts your repentance, forgives your sins, and restores you by the Holy Spirit to newness of life.  
**Amen.**

First Lesson

Matthew 6:1-6, page 89

Second Lesson

Ecclesiastes 3:18-21, page 575

Sermon

“Time Does Not Bring Relief”

To make a right beginning, and as a mark of our mortality, let us now bow our heads before our Creator and Redeemer. Consider what divine mercy, courage or healing you need from God this Lenten season in order to prepare your heart to welcome the joyful celebration of Easter.

*A brief silence is kept.*

\*Thanksgiving over the Ashes

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

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 we may remember that only by Your gracious gift are we given everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Imposition of Ashes

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

Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: Christians have always observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the church to prepare for Easter by a season of penitence, fasting, and prayer. This season of forty days provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for baptism into the body of Christ. It is also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had been separated from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness and restored to the fellowship of the church. The whole congregation is thus reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our baptismal faith. I invite you, in the name of the Lord, to observe a holy Lent, by self-examination, penitence, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and by reading and meditating on the Word of God.

**\*Congregational participation is in bold type.**

Hymn 724

“O Jesus, I Have Promised”

Dismissal with Blessing

Go forth into the world in the strength of God’s mercy to live and to serve in newness of life. May Jesus Christ, the bread of heaven, bless and keep you.

**Amen.**

May the Lamb of God, who laid down his life for all, graciously smile upon you.

**Amen.**

May the Lord God order all your days and deeds in peace.

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**\*Congregational participation is in bold type.**