

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past we cannot change; open us to a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Please come forward to receive ashes when you are ready.

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" (Genesis 3:19)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Ezekiel 36:25-27

Hear the promise of God: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances." Friends, the promises of God are true: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

BLESSING

Grant, us, your faithful people, most merciful Lord, pardon and peace, that we may be cleansed from all sins and serve you with quiet hearts and minds, through Christ our Lord, Amen.



*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection,
and the fellowship of his sufferings. PHILIPPIANS 3:10*

Providence Forge Presbyterian Church
Ash Wednesday
February 22, 2023

Welcome to this time of reflection and penitence for Ash Wednesday. Please use the following prayers and process of self-examination to prepare yourself for the Imposition of Ashes.

INVITATION

We are here on this Ash Wednesday to repent of our sins, intercede on behalf of a sinful world, and seek God's face in the renewal of our lives and of this world. Today marks the beginning of Lent. As part of our service today, we will have an extended period of confession and an examination of our lives in the light of God's grace. As a sign of penitence, you are invited to come forward to receive the imposition of ashes, an ancient symbol of humility and grief.

I invite you, 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.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 51: 10-11; 17

Create in me a clean heart, O God: and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not scorn.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God: out of your love and mercy, you formed us from the dust of the earth, and breathed into us your Spirit of life. Call forth our prayers and acts of tenderness. Strengthen us through these forty days to face our mortality, that we may wonder at your steadfast love, and comprehend more fully the joy of Easter. Renew us through prayer, fasting, and works of compassion, as you lead us on the Way of the Cross, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXAMINATION OF SIN

Richard Lobs III

Use the following list to silently identify areas of sin in your life that you would like to change.

- **Pride**- putting self in the place of God as the center and objective of our life. Pride is the refusal to recognize our status as creatures, dependent upon God.
- **Irreverence**- deliberate neglect of God's worship, or contentment with a perfunctory participation in it. Manifest as cynicism toward the holy or as use of Christianity for personal advantage.
- **Sentimentality**-satisfaction with pious feelings and beautiful ceremony without striving for personal holiness.
- **Distrust**- refusal to recognize God's wisdom and love. Undue worry, anxiety or perfectionism. Attempts to gain or keep control of our life in various ways.
- **Disobedience**- rejection of God's known will. The refusal to learn God's nature through scripture. Breaking confidence by irresponsibility and unnecessary disappointment of others. Breaking legal or moral contracts.
- **Impenitence**- Refusal to search out and face up to our sins, or to confess them before God. Self-justification by believing our sins to be insignificant, natural, or inevitable; by refusing to apologize; by being unwilling to forgive ourselves.
- **Vanity**-Failure to credit God and others for their part in our lives. Boasting, exaggeration, ostentatious behavior, undue concern over "things"
- **Arrogance**- Being overbearing, argumentative, opinionated, obstinate.
- **Resentment**-Rejection of talents, abilities, or opportunities God and others give us. Rebellion, hatred of God or human beings.
- **Cynicism**. Envy- Dissatisfaction with our place in God's order of creation. Manifests itself in jealousy, malice, and contempt for others or others' things.