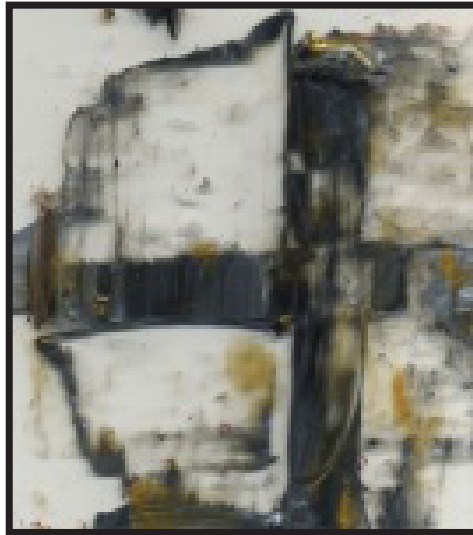


**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**Imposition of Ashes**  
**Ash Wednesday**  
**7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.**



*Blessing the Dust*  
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*Please use this guide for silent, personal reflection and meditation. You may come up anytime for the imposition of ashes.  
Stay as long as you like. Please leave in silence.*

**Opening Prayer**

O God, set your blessing upon us as we begin this day together. Confirm us in the truth by which we rightly live; confront us with the truth from which we wrongly turn. We ask not for what we want, but for what you know we need, as we offer this day and ourselves for you and to you, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

**Scripture**

Psalm 51

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, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. 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. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. 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. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

**Prayer**

O Christ, the Master Carpenter, who at the last through wood and nails, purchased our whole salvation, wield well your tools in the workshop of your world, so that we who come rough-hewn to your bench may here be fashioned to a truer beauty of your hand. We ask it for your own name's sake. Amen.

## Scripture

Matthew 6:1-21

“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. “So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. “Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

## Prayer

O God, lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth. Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust. Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe. We ask it for your own name's sake. Amen.

## Affirmation of Faith

With the whole church, we affirm that we are made in God's image, befriended by Christ, empowered by the Spirit. With people everywhere, we affirm God's goodness at the heart of humanity, planted more deeply than all that is wrong. With all creation, we celebrate the miracle and wonder of life; the unfolding purposes of God, forever at work in ourselves and the world.

## Reflect on these words

This is the day that God has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. We will not offer to God offerings that cost us nothing. Go in peace to love and to serve; we will seek peace and pursue it.

## Benediction and Blessing

May God who is present in sunrise and nightfall, and in the crossing of the sea, guide your feet as you go. May God who is with you when you sit and when you stand, encompass you with love and lead you by the hand. May God who knows your path and the places where you rest, be with you in your waiting, be your good news for sharing, and lead you in the way that is everlasting.

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These resources are from the *Iona Worship Book*.

## Join us again this evening:

**Family Worship** is in the Sanctuary at 5:00 p.m.

**Ash Wednesday Supper** (\$7) is in the Social Hall at 6:00 p.m.

**Ecumenical Taizé Worship** is in the Sanctuary at 7:30 p.m.

