

Welcome to *Amherst Presbyterian Church*. We are one of the visible churches for the invisible church that shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Christ that fills all in all.

You are so welcome to our worship service.



Ash Wednesday

February 22, 2023 at 7:00 PM

AMHERST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
The Presbyterian Church in the USA
All Are Welcome

*** We invite you to please stand, as you are able, for items preceded by an asterisk.**

PRELUDE: Ave Verum for Cello and Piano by Mozart *David Meyer, cello*

WELCOME *Rev. Amir Tawadrous*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Create in me a clean heart, O God,

People: and put a new and right spirit within me.

Pastor: Do not cast me away from your presence,

People: and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

Pastor: Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

People: and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Pastor: O Lord, open my lips,

People: and my mouth will declare your praise.

*** HYMN:** There's a Wideness in God's Mercy # 298

OPENING SENTENCES (Psalm 46:1-3)

Pastor: God is our refuge and strength,

People: a present help in trouble.

Pastor: Therefore we will not fear

People: though the earth should change,

Pastor: though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

People: though the waters roar and foam,

Pastor: though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

People: God's love endures forever.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(in unison)

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love. According to your abundant mercy, blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity and cleanse us from our sin. We confess before you the sins we recognize in our individual lives and in this faith community, your church. Hear us as we recall them in silent communion with you... Help us, O God, to be truthful with ourselves and with one another, and with you. Spare your people, and guide us through our difficult walk with Christ amid the challenges we face on the way to the cross. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

(in unison)

In steadfast love, God welcomes and forgives us, restoring to us the joy of salvation. Our contrite hearts and willing spirits can receive God's reconciling gifts. In secret, quiet times with God every day, we will know that in Christ we possess everything we need.

PASSING OF PEACE

Pastor: "The Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you..."

People: "...and also with you."

* **HYMN:** What Wondrous Love Is This # 85

FIRST READING

Psalm 51

(page 520 in your pew Bibles)

SECOND READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

¹ "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. ² "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. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁵ "And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the

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synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.⁶ 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.

¹⁶ “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.¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal;²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Pastor: The Word of God, to all people of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

REFLECTION/MEDITATION

“Our True Treasure”

Rev. Gregory Hall

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION ~ *Please observe this time of silence.*

LITANY OF PENITENCE

Pastor: Holy God, we confess to you and to one another that we have sinned, by our own fault, in our thoughts, our words, and our actions.

People: **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Pastor: We have not loved you or our neighbors with our whole hearts.

People: **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Pastor: We have failed to do justice and to love mercy and to live humbly.

People: **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Pastor: We have left many things undone that would bring justice and equality to the human community.

People: **Have mercy on us, O God.**

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Pastor: We have despoiled the natural world that you created in beauty and rich diversity.

People: Have mercy on us, O God.

Pastor: We continually store up possessions as earthly treasure and neglect the true treasure that you offer.

People: Have mercy on us, O God.

Pastor: With honesty, we confess our pride, our envy of others, our anger, our self-indulgence, our contempt for those who differ from us.

People: Have mercy on us, O God.

Pastor: So we begin a journey through the wilderness of Lent with the marks of our human brokenness upon us. Accompany us on the way; forgive us as we stumble; encourage us as we learn the way of discipleship; bring us safely to the cross and the empty tomb. Restore us to wholeness, and embrace us in your steadfast love.

People: Turn to us in your mercy, O God, and redeem us. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

(follow insert)

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF A HOLY LENT

We begin the journey to Easter with the sign of ashes. The ashes placed on our foreheads convey the uncertainty and frailty of our lives. May they remind us to spend the days of Lent in prayer and fasting, in examination of our lives, in doing works of love and justice, and in grounding ourselves in the words of Scripture.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

(Everyone is invited to receive ashes from the ministers at the front of the sanctuary. We would ask that you please wait for the ushers to invite you forward, row by row. Please approach via the center aisle and return to your seats by the side aisles.)

LENTEN PRAYER

(in unison)

Dear God, who calls us to journey through the wilderness, we step forward with courage, called to walk the way of Christ. May we walk in humility and courage, as did Abraham when he prepared to sacrifice his son; in honesty, as did the Samaritan woman when Jesus challenged her at the well, in fortitude, as did Jesus when confronted by the Tempter.

As we experience our internal and individual repentance, may we also repent of the social brokenness that we have caused, the injustices and inequalities we have turned away from. Give us compassion for the mourning and disaster that others experience, and show us how to be healers even as we ourselves are healed.

And after our forty days of reflection, repentance, and mourning, when we come at dawn to the Easter garden, may we know the true joy of Resurrection morning. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(in unison)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

* **HYMN:** In the Cross of Christ I Glory # 84

*** BENEDICTION**

Begin the journey with courage and commitment, marked by your humanity. And may the blessing of the One who walks the pathway with you sustain you in love. In the Holy Triune name, Amen.

POSTLUDE: Where're You Walk by Handel

In observance of Ash Wednesday, we request that everyone depart the service in silence. Thank you.

ASH WEDNESDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- We welcome everyone to this evening's service, especially those from our sister churches, Clarence and North Presbyterian. You are all invited to continue our Lenten journey together on Maundy Thursday (April 6) at 7:30 PM at Clarence Presbyterian and on Good Friday (April 7) at noon at North Presbyterian.
- When we partake of the Sacrament of Eucharist, we will use the sealed communion kits that were available in the Narthex on your way in. If you do not have one, an usher can bring one to you. They have two seals: peel back the top seal for the wafer and the second seal for the juice. The receptacle in the Narthex can be used for disposal of empty containers on your way out.
- A freewill offering plate is available in the Narthex if you feel so moved by the Spirit.

Special Thanks to this evening's worship leaders and participants:

Ministers:

Rev. Amir Tawadrous (Amherst)
Rev. Gregory Hall (Clarence)
Rev. William Hennessey (North)

Musicians:

Donna Lorenzo, Music Director (Amherst)
Mr. David Meyer, Cello
Vocalists from the choirs of
Amherst, Clarence, and North
Presbyterian Churches.

Ushers:

Roberta Jones (Amherst)
Tom Potts (Amherst)

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Rev. Amir's Cell: 773-961-6977 / **Email:** APCpastor@verizon.net

Rev. Amir's hours: 9:00am—12:30pm, Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri, and by appointment
(scheduling your visit is recommended)

Church website: <https://amherstpreshurch.com>

Facebook: Amherst Presbyterian Church—closed group; ask to be invited