

The Worship of God

Fayetteville First United Methodist Church

ASH WEDNESDAY | 6:00 PM | FEBRUARY 22, 2023

GREETING

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin
Senior Minister

OPENING PRAYER

Dr. Martin

*HYMN 269

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

LAND OF REST

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Dr. Martin and People

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit,
that, as the Scriptures are read and your Word proclaimed,
we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Dr. Martin

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near— ²a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

¹²Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

¹⁴Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? ¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. ¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

May God bless the hearing of this scripture.

Thanks be to God.

CHORAL ANTHEM

Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God
Carl F. Mueller

Chancel Choir
SSA

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence
And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation
And uphold me, uphold me with Thy free Spirit,
Thy free Spirit.
Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways,
And sinners will be converted unto Thee.
Create in me a clean heart, O God.

***SCRIPTURE LESSON**

II Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10
The Message

The Rev. Allyson Lawrence
Associate Minister

We're Christ's representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God's work of making things right between them. We're speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; he's already a friend with you. How? you ask. In Christ. God put the wrong on him who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God.

Companions as we are in this work with you, we beg you, please don't squander one bit of this marvelous life God has given us. God reminds us,
I heard your call in the nick of time;
The day you needed me, I was there to help.

Well, now is the right time to listen, the day to be helped. Don't put it off; don't frustrate God's work by showing up late, throwing a question mark over everything we're doing. Our work as God's servants gets validated—or not—in the details. People are watching us as we stay at our post, alertly, unswervingly . . . in hard times, tough times, bad times; when we're beaten up, jailed, and mobbed; working hard, working late, working without eating; with pure heart, clear head, steady hand; in gentleness, holiness, and honest love; when we're telling the truth, and when God's showing his power; when we're doing our best setting things right; when we're praised, and when we're blamed; slandered, and honored; true to our word, though distrusted; ignored by the world, but recognized by God; terrifically alive, though rumored to be dead; beaten within an inch of our lives, but refusing to die; immersed in tears, yet always filled with deep joy; living on handouts, yet enriching many; having nothing, having it all.

May God bless the hearing of this scripture.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Don't Squander This Life

The Rev. Charles Robinson

INVITATION TO OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE

Dr. Martin

THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES

Rev. Lawrence

IMPOSITION OF THE ASHES

PRAYER OF CONFESSION 785

Psalm 51:1-17

Dr. Martin and **People**

CONFESSION AND PARDON

Rev. Lawrence

***HYMN 402**

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian

I WANT TO BE A CHRISTIAN

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Dr. Martin and **People**

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

***BENEDICTION**

Dr. Martin

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Offer one another signs of reconciliation and love:

"The peace of Christ be with you." **"And also with you."**

*Please stand in body or spirit.

Congregational responses are in **bold type**.

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AA Meetings: Sundays 3 PM; Mondays 7 PM;
Wednesdays through Saturdays 7 PM

NA Meeting: Thursdays and Saturdays 7 PM

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