

RETURN  
*to the*  
LORD



*your*

GOD

**ASH WEDNESDAY**  
**Service of the Imposition of Ashes**

February 18, 2015

6:30 p.m.

**GATHERING MUSIC**

*Create in Me A Clean Heart, O God*

Chancel Choir

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

*(Based on Joel 2:12-14)*

*L: Behold, now is the time. Today is the day of God's salvation.*

**P: We tremble in fear and anticipation at the nearness of a God so great and powerful.**

*L: Return with all your heart, with weeping, fasting, and mourning.*

**P: God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

*L: Be reconciled to God, through Christ Jesus, and receive a new and right spirit within.*

**P: May the Holy Spirit guide us, preparing us for faithful discipleship, and enabling us to worship with pure hearts.**

*L: Let us pray:*

**All: Gracious and merciful God, we return to you with hearts that long for healing and wholeness. As we worship you this evening, examine us and all our ways. Keep us from self-delusions that overlook our shortcomings in following you and living up to our potential. May our piety this evening strengthen our love for you, embolden our genuine care for others, and inspire our prayers and song out of deep gratitude for your grace. Walk with us as we enter Lent, lift us up through your Holy Spirit that we may find renewal and a deeper faith in Christ Jesus. In his name we pray. Amen.**

**OPENING HYMN**

*Friends in Faith*

Insert

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**SCRIPTURE READING**

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

O.T. page 846

**SCRIPTURE READING**

Psalm 51:1-17

O.T. page 520

**ANTHEM**

*In You, There is a Refuge*

Chancel Choir

**LITANY OF PENITENCE**

Insert

**INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE**

## INSERT - LITANY OF PENITENCE

Sisters and brothers, let us return to God and God's ways.

**Yes, let us return again and again to God.**

**Let us bring joy to God, that God may rejoice in our return.**

Let us not waste our time in preparing a defense or in hating ourselves, or in pondering the wounds of our guilt and despair.

**Let us cast it all at God's feet - the God whose love aches for us, who hovers over us in longing and who dwells within us, who waits for our turning, as God takes away the pain and brokenness of our lives.**

O God, we have traveled far. We confess to you all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

**we confess to you, O God.**

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

**we confess to you, O God.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

**we confess to you, O God.**

Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrongs we have done and for the things we have left undone. For our neglect of human need and suffering,

**accept our repentance, O God.**

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

**accept our repentance, O God.**

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

**accept our repentance, O God.**

Restore us, O God, and may we experience the love that enfolds us.

**Favorably hear us, O God, for your mercy is great. Amen.**

**THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES** (unison)

Merciful God, may these ashes be to us a sign of our mortality and our penitence. May we remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life. We are thankful for the gift of life we enjoy, both now and eternally. Amen.

**IMPOSITION OF THE ASHES**

*You are invited to come forward, if you wish, where ashes will be placed on your forehead in the sign of the cross, and with the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." -Genesis 3:19*

**\*CLOSING HYMN**

*Restore in Us, O God*

Glory 434

**\*CHARGE AND BLESSING**

*L: The End is God's. The Beginning is God's.*

**P: The Storm is God's. The Peace is God's.**

*L: The Depths are God's. The Heights are God's.*

**P: The Dark is God's. The Light is God's.**

*L: For all times, all things, belong to God.*

**P: We travel with God to the end from the beginning.**

*L: As we enter Lent, walk with the Lord of your salvation.*

**P: We continue with God during the storm as well as the peace.**

*L: Walk with the God of your deliverance.*

**P: We journey with God through the depths and the heights.**

*L: Walk with the Lord of your restoration.*

**P: We remain with God in the dark and the light.**

*L: Walk with the Lord of your assurance;*

**All: For all times, all things, belong to God.**

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*\*Those who are able may stand.*



**SHARING IN WORSHIP LEADERSHIP TONIGHT:**

*Rev. Rob Leischner, Pastor*

*Suzanne Anderson, Music Director; Organist*

*St. Andrew's Chancel Choir*

*"Charge" adapted from liturgy written by Lisa Frenz*