



*Grounded in the grace of God,
we are a vibrant Christian community,
disciples of all ages, gathered for worship and nurture,
scattered to serve and to love.*
MPC Mission Statement adopted by the Session March 31, 2008

WORSHIP for FEBRUARY 22, 2023
ASH WEDNESDAY

GATHERING

PRELUDE — *Now Let Us All with One Accord* - Robert Lind

Yun Kang

CALL to WORSHIP

Pastor Rachel Rhodes

One: As we enter Lent, may we come in repentance,
All: For our God is merciful.
One: May we come in humility,
All: For our God is great.
One: May we come in confidence,
All: For our God is gracious.
One: As we enter Lent, may we come seeking forgiveness, healing, and wholeness.
All: We seek knowing we will find.

HYMN — *All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night*

TALLIS' CANON

*All praise to thee, my God, this night,
for all the blessings of the light!
Keep me, O keep me safe from harm
within the shelter of thine arm!*
*Forgive me, Lord, through Christ, I pray,
the wrong that I have done this day,
that I, before I sleep may be
at peace with neighbor, self, and thee.*
*O may thy soul on thee repose,
and with sweet sleep mine eyelids close.
Refresh my strength, for thine own sake,
to serve thee well when I awake.*
*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Pastor Alex Lester-Abdalla

All: Holy and merciful God, we confess to you and to one another that we have sinned.
One: We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.
All: Have mercy on us, O God.
One: We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,
All: We confess to you, O God.
One: Our self-centered decisions and our exploitation of other people,
All: We confess to you, O God.
One: Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrongs we have done. For our neglect of human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,
All: Accept our repentance, O God.
One: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

All: Accept our repentance, O God.

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

All: Accept our repentance, O God, for your mercy is great.

SILENT PRAYERS of CONFESSION *Here each worshiper may offer silent prayers of confession.*

PROMISE of FORGIVENESS

LITURGY of the WORD

PRAYER for ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING — *Isaiah 58:1-12*

Shout out; do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they want God on their side.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers.

You fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, “Here I am.”

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM — *Create in Me a Clean Heart* - John Carter

Chancel Choir

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

-Psalm 51:10-12

MEDITATION

Tori Paquette

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.
Let the water and the blood from thy wounded side which flowed
be of sin the double cure, cleanse from guilt and make me pure.*

*Not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's demands.
Could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow,
all for sin could not atone. Thou must save, and thou alone.*

*Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to thy cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress, helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly; wash me, Savior, or I die.*

*While I draw this fleeting breath, when my eyelids close in death,
when I soar to worlds unknown, see thee on thy judgement throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.*

PRAYER

One: We begin our journey toward Easter with the sign of ashes. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, calls us to heartfelt repentance, and urges us to place our hope in God alone. Let us pray:

All: **Almighty God, You have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes remind us of our mortality and penitence, and teach us again that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

IMPOSITION of ASHES**PRAYERS of the PEOPLE****THE LORD'S PRAYER**

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.

S E N D I N G**HYMN — *In a Deep, Unbounded Darkness***

DIVINUM MINISTERIUM

*In a deep, unbounded darkness, long before the first light shone,
you, O God, beyond all merit worked a wonder faith makes known:
in your mercy, in your mercy, you embraced us as your own,
evermore and evermore.*

*Though our world is everchanging, you are constant, firm, and sure,
faithful to your covenant promise. Trusting you, we live, secure;
singing praises, singing praises, long as heart and breath endure,
evermore and evermore.*

*Joy transforms our lips to boasting only in your matchless grace,
sending Christ to dwell among us, Word made flesh in time and space:
Friend and Savior, Friend and Savior, in whose life we glimpse your face,
evermore and evermore.*

*God of Hagar, God of Sarah, God of nomad Abraham;
God of Miryam, God of Moses, Fiery Pillar, great I Am:
lead us homeward, leads us homeward, to the love-feast of the Lamb,
evermore and evermore.*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE — Voluntary on *Herzliebster Jesu* - Robert Lind

PARTICIPATING IN TONIGHT'S SERVICE

Rev. Rachel Rhodes
Senior Pastor & Head of Staff

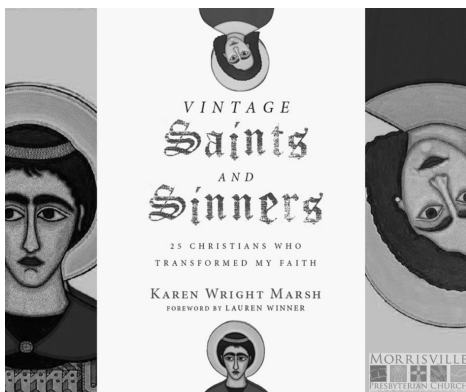
Rev. Alex Lester-Abdalla
Associate Pastor for Lifelong Faith Formation & Mission

Tori Paquette
Pastoral Intern

Chancel Choir
Director, Tim Carpenter

Yun Kang
Organist

JOIN US FOR LENTEN SMALL GROUPS!



Have you ever wanted to dive into Lent a bit more than you have in the past? Or commit to something for Lent that's more spiritually meaningful than giving up chocolate? Here is your chance! Join us for our Lenten Small Groups this year and see what God might do through us and among us as we explore what it means to be "God's People Under Construction." In these groups, we'll explore saints and sinners throughout history with the help of Karen Wright Marsh's book, *Vintage Saints and Sinners: 25 Christians Who Transformed My Faith*. You'll also have a chance to enjoy time and conversation with new friends at MPC. Starting this Monday, February 27, these Lenten Small Groups will meet at different times throughout each week for 5 weeks. The days and times are: Mondays at 11:00 a.m.; Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.; and Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. You can sign up for the day and time that work best for you! Contact the church office at office@mpcusa.org or call 215-295-4191, and let's journey through Lent together!

A PEOPLE UNDER CONSTRUCTION - NEW LENTEN SERMON SERIES



If you know anything about home renovation, you know that you often have to deconstruct the space you're working on before you ever have the chance to reconstruct it into something new. You have to tear out the kitchen cabinets, and the sink, and the carpet, and the bathroom tiles before anything new and exciting can take shape. And sometimes beneath that carpet is a beautiful hardwood floor, yet to be discovered. But other times beneath those tiles or behind those cabinets are even more issues you didn't see coming. There's too much water damage or someone sought for a cheap fix years ago that's going to take even more time to remedy now.

Well, Lent is a time when we are called to be God's people under construction. A time when we bring before the Lord all the things that separate us from God; all the things that we'd like to renovate in our lives. And that work can be messy and hard! But it is also work that can be exciting, life-giving, and freeing as God

partners with us along the way. Because out of the ashes of any destruction, we are digging and finding what's valuable and discarding what's not, and trusting that all the while, God is making things new. So join us this Lent as we seek to be God's people under construction!