



We welcome all.

North Decatur Presbyterian Church is called by God to be a community of faith and worship, dedicated to Christian education and nurture so that we may go into the world to serve, work for peace and justice and share God's love with all people.

611 Medlock Road, Decatur, GA 30033
www.ndpc.org

Ash Wednesday

February 22nd, 2023

7PM

** stand in body or spirit*

PREPARATION & ADORATION

PRELUDE

Wayfaring Stranger

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

God's people, you are called to gather on the cusp of Lent.

**From breast-feeding infants to seasoned elders,
we are all welcome.**

God's people, you are called to turn from your sin.

**From those of us who wear our faults plainly on our sleeves,
to those of us who fight furiously to keep our sins hidden from others' eyes,
we are all welcome.**

God's people, you are called to be reconciled to God.

**From those of us who turn away out of anger or rejection,
to those of us who quietly suffer and think God doesn't notice or care,
we are all welcome.**

Welcome to Lent.

-by Thom Shuman

*OPENING SONG

We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight (v. 1, 2, 3, 4)

Glory to God #817

FIRST LESSON

Matthew 6:1-4

“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.”

REFLECTION: THE GIFT OF GIVING ALMS

Rev. David Lewicki

- Do you ever think about why you do—or do not do—things for others? When do you decide to help others or refrain from helping?
- What does it mean for the “left hand to not know what the right hand is doing?” Do you ever experience that kind of unconscious “flow?” If so, when?

Write your own responses here...

SONG

Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God (v. 1, 2, 1)

Glory to God #423

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 6:5-6

⁵ “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. 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.

REFLECTION: THE GIFT OF PRAYER

Rev. Mary Anona Stoops

- What, do you suppose, is a hypocrite? When do you most feel like a hypocrite? What do you think might allow you to examine your own hypocrisy and move in a direction of greater integrity?
- What do you think it means that God is “in secret?” What is the “reward” that God promises to those who pray in secret?

Write your own responses here...

SONG

Hear My Prayer
NDPC Community Choir

Moses Hogan

THIRD LESSON

Matthew 6:16-18

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.

REFLECTION: THE GIFT OF FASTING

Katie Archibald-Woodward

- Jesus appears to be observing that there is a discontinuity in those he is criticizing between what is going on inside and what they are showing on the outside. What can you do to bring your inside and your outside into greater alignment?
- Misery is not the intention of fasting. What is the point of fasting? What can be learned from going without?

Write your own responses here...

* SONG

God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us (v. 1, 2, 3)

Glory to God #436

PSALM 51

-from *Psalms for Praying*, by Nan Merrill

**Have mercy on me. O Gracious One,
according to your steadfast love.
According to Your abundant kindness,
forgive me where my thoughts and deeds
have hurt others.**

Lead me in the paths of justice,
guide my steps on the paths of peace!
Teach me, that I may know my weaknesses,
the shortcomings that bind me,
the unloving ways that separate me,
that keep me from recognizing Your life in
me.

**For, I keep company with fear,
and dwell in the house of division.
Yet, I was brought forth in love,
and love is my birthright.**

Create in me a clean heart, O Gracious One,
And put a new and right spirit in me.
Enfold me in the arms of Love,

and fill me with the Holy Spirit.
Restore in me the joy of Your saving grace,
and encourage me with a new spirit.

**Then I will teach others Your ways
and prisoners of fear will return to You.
Deliver me from the addictions of
society,
O Healer of Souls.
O keep me from temptations
that I may tell of Your justice and mercy.**

(cont'd on next page)

O Gracious One, open my lips and
my mouth shall sing forth Your praise.
For You do not want sacrifice.
You delight in our friendship with You.
A sacrifice most appropriate is a humble
spirit,
an open and contrite heart, O Merciful One,
is the gift You most desire.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*All who wish to receive ashes are invited to come forward and form two lines in the center aisle.
If, for any reason, you are not able to come forward, signal to an usher that you wish to have the
ashes brought to your seat.*

*Upon receiving ashes, you are invited to offer the ashes to the person behind you in line. Rub one
finger into the ashes, turn to the person behind you in line, and place the sign of the cross on
their forehead.*

As you do so say:

***Remember, from dust you were created and to dust you will return,
And every day of your life, you are loved by God.***

After you have offered ashes to another, you may return to your seat.

MUSIC DURING THE IMPOSITION

Sign Us with Ashes

Glory to God #433

**Sign us with ashes, merciful God,
Children of dust, as to dust we return.
Sign us with ashes, merciful God.
Mark us and make us your own.**

*BLESSING

Spirit of God,
when paths of transformation
lead me into times of wilderness –
periods of learning and unlearning,
realities winding and unruly,
may your presence be my steady companion.

To you, I will turn for nourishment along the way.
Remembering the simple pleasures of being alive.
Of being together.
Of being among the creations of your hand.
There is no stretch of the earth where delight cannot be found.

Depart in quiet.

POSTLUDE

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WELCOME VISITORS

We're happy that you've joined us! Please introduce yourself to those around you as you are comfortable. You may share your email address with us by using the QR code on this bulletin—we will send you our weekly e-newsletter. You can learn more about NDPC's ministries and social justice work at www.ndpc.org. We come from different backgrounds, traditions, and cultures to worship. Please use language and pronouns for God and for yourself that are authentic to you. After worship, the pastors would love to meet you.



Welcome, Visitors!

NDPC Staff:

David Lewicki, *Pastor*
Mary Anona Stoops, *Pastor for Older Adult Formation*
Erin Reed Cooper, *Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries*
Huu Mai, *Music Director*
Mahsheed Khawary, *Office Administrator*
Javier Sanchez, *Custodian*
Victoria Robinson, *Ministry Fellow*
Emily Herbert, *Graduate Music Fellow*