



The Protestant Community Church

*"Cathedral of the Woods"*

100 Stokes Road, Medford Lakes, New Jersey 08055

Phone: (609) 654-4220 website: [www.protestantcommunitychurch.org](http://www.protestantcommunitychurch.org)

The Protestant Community Church: An inclusive, ecumenical faith community purposefully seeking to be caring, faithful disciples of Jesus Christ through worship, study, prayer, and Christian service.

---

**MARCH 5, 2025 - ASH WEDNESDAY**

---

## **Prelude**

### **Welcome and Concerns of the Church**

*Members, friends, and visitors are invited to sign the pew pad found at the table by the entrance.*

## **Call to Worship**

(Pastor/Congregation)

Lent is an opportunity for healthy repentance—repentance for our indifference in the face of the permeating evil of the world, repentance for personal sins which we have glossed over as "mere foibles."

**According to your loving kindness, remember me,  
God of goodness and saving grace.**

Lent is a time for joy; the exhilaration that comes; from defying temptations, from turning our face to the light that shines on the narrow path of Christ Jesus, from walking into adverse winds and enjoying small victories day by day.

**Make me to know your ways, O God, teach me your paths, for you are the God of my salvation and my true happiness.**

# Litany of Penitence

(Pastor/Congregation)

Most holy and merciful Father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

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.

***Have mercy on us, Lord.***

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

***Have mercy on us, Lord.***

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,

***We confess to you, Lord.***

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

***We confess to you, Lord.***

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

***We confess to you, Lord.***

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

***We confess to you, Lord.***

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

***We confess to you, Lord.***

***[continued onto the next page]***

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done: for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

***Accept our repentance, Lord.***

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, Lord.***

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

***Accept our repentance, Lord.***

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;

***Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.***

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

***That we may show forth your glory in the world.***

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

***Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.***

## **Invitation**

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith. I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word.

## Imposition of Ashes

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

The ashes are imposed with the following words: ***Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.***

## Benediction

So, you have come in the struggle of your lives,

To acknowledge Jesus and his life and death.

While you wear the symbol of all death on your foreheads, still, know in your hearts that this is not all there is.

"Ashes to ashes and dust to dust" is the stuff of our little lives.

But the heart of the matter is the alleluia -

Faith in the God within you and the fire of Christ's love in your life and work.

Go in peace and hope, and gather your true purpose about you!

You will sing "Alleluia" once again! Amen.

### [Note about this service from the Worship Committee]

As an interdenominational church, this service was put together using research from a variety of different resources, including from our own Protestant Community Church services of years past, content from the International Council of Community Churches, content from the United Church of Christ, content from the Episcopal Church, and so on. Members of the Worship Committee have worked with Father Mike to ensure that this Ash Wednesday service stays true to our mission statement.

**The church office is open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
and on Friday from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. (Closed on Friday during the summer)**

**The office closes from 12:30 - 1:00 for lunch.**

E.F. Michael Morgan, Interim Pastor  
Pamela Jones, Business Administrator  
Kayla MacKinnon, Admin. Assistant/Wedding Coordinator  
Andria Gross, Lay Family Minister  
Lynne Poag, Chimes Coordinator

[fathermike@protestantcommunitychurch.org](mailto:fathermike@protestantcommunitychurch.org)  
[pamela@protestantcommunitychurch.org](mailto:pamela@protestantcommunitychurch.org)  
[kayla@protestantcommunitychurch.org](mailto:kayla@protestantcommunitychurch.org)  
[sundayschool@protestantcommunitychurch.org](mailto:sundayschool@protestantcommunitychurch.org)  
[chimescoordinator@protestantcommunitychurch.org](mailto:chimescoordinator@protestantcommunitychurch.org)