



**THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY**  
(Reformed Church in America)

**Founded in 1642**

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## **ASH WEDNESDAY**

**February 14, 2018**

**7:30 pm**

The season of Lent as a season of reorientation in our lives of faith only makes sense in the context of the seasons which precede and follow it – Epiphany in which we celebrate Christ’s baptism and the covenant grounded in our baptisms, and Easter in which we share in God’s promise of new life for the whole world, grounded in the resurrection of Christ. This Ash Wednesday we begin our Lenten season by orienting ourselves in a God-direction: recalling promises made for us or by us in baptism, participating in the imposition of ashes as a sign of our repentance, and holding fast the promise of God’s forgiveness for each one of us.

With each section of tonight’s service, there is an action in which you are welcome to participate as you are comfortable.

### **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

**Prelude:** Chorale Prelude on:

*Oh people, repent your wickedness; All things mortal soon must perish*

Johann Sebastian Bach

#### **Welcome and Call to Worship**

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Psalm 124:8

**Amen.**

## **The Season of Epiphany: Baptism**

**Hymn #70** Christ, When for Us You Were Baptized

CAITHNESS CM

**Reading** Romans 6:3-5

~ silence ~

### **Renewal of the Baptismal Covenant**

Leader: Do you renew your commitment to Jesus Christ made in baptism?

**Community: I do.**

L: Do you believe in God who comes to us in countless ways?

**C: I believe in God, Creator of heaven and earth,  
made flesh in Jesus Christ, Healer, Prophet, Redeemer,  
and in the Holy Spirit, Flame of hope, Gatherer of the church.**

L: Will you continue in the teaching and work of Christian  
community, in the breaking of bread and in prayer?

**C: I will, with God's help.**

L: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people,  
respecting the dignity of every human being?

**C: I will, with God's help.**

### **\*A Reminder of Our Commitment**

“\_\_\_\_\_ , remember your baptism.”

(With the water make the sign of the cross on your neighbor's forehead,  
addressing her/him by name.)

# The Lenten Season: Repentance

Hymn

Give Me a Clean Heart

Psalm 51:1-12

The musical score is written in G minor (three flats) and 3/4 time. It consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Give me a clean heart so I may serve you. God, fix my heart so that I may be used by you. For I'm not worthy of all these blessings. Give me a clean heart and I'll follow you." The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

~ silence ~

Harm. J. Jefferson Cleveland © Abington Press used by permission of Onelicense# A-7000689



As you leave the sanctuary, you are welcome to come forward to the communion table for a nail. Perhaps holding this nail in your pocket during Lent will remind you of Christ's love for you, a love the world found weak and foolish, but that the faithful understand as strong and wise.



This service is modeled on one created by Fr. Jeffrey Rowthorn, formerly of Yale Divinity School. Liturgy adapted from words of Molly Phinney Baskette in *Before the Amen*.

We meet each Sunday morning at 10:30 am for worship. This Sunday's sermon title is "Passionate Care." Come join us.

**Worship participants:**

Liturgist: The Rev. Susan Vincent-Cox;  
Officiant: The Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden;  
Musicians: Mary Bon, Minister of Music & the First Church in Albany Choir



*Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent, the period of forty days, not including Sundays, preceding Easter. Historically, Lent began as a time of prayer and fasting by new converts to the Christian faith in preparation for their baptism at the service of Easter Vigil. Eventually Lent became a time of penance and preparation for all Christians.*

*The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in both Jewish and Christian worship. The biblical witness is found in the story of the creation and fall of humankind: “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). Abraham mentions ashes as a sign of humility before God: “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord; I who am but dust and ashes.” (Genesis 18:27) Daniel makes use of ashes as a sign of penitence when he offers a prayer of confession on behalf of the people of Israel: “Then I turned to the Lord God, to seek an answer by prayer and supplication with fasting and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession....” (Daniel 9: 3-4a)*

*This first day of Lent reminds us (in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism) that two things are involved in genuine repentance: “the dying of the old self and the coming to life of the new.” The way to Easter is the way of the cross. “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:3-4). New life with Christ involves a daily surrendering of the old life. The first step of this Lenten journey invites us to acknowledge our mortality and our sinfulness by the imposition of ashes.*

## ***Founded in 1642; Continuing in Ministry Today***

*In response to God's unconditional love for all people made known to us in Jesus Christ, we are called to be a welcoming and affirming community. The First Church in Albany includes young and old, families, couples and singles, rich and poor, persons of various races, ethnicities, backgrounds, sexual orientation and gender identities, differing physical and mental abilities, believers and seekers. We welcome into the full life of the church all those whom God sends us. Centered in Christ, we commit ourselves to breaking down dividing walls and building a community where all are loved*