



The Worship of God ✠ February 22, 2023 ✠ Ash Wednesday

## THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Main & West Streets ♦ Post Office Box 649 ♦ Ahoskie, North Carolina 27910  
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*The First Baptist Church of Ahoskie is a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship congregation.*

# THE WORSHIP OF GOD

February 22, 2023 ✠ 7:00 PM

✠ *The Season of the Church Year: Ash Wednesday*

*On Ash Wednesday, Christians begin the spiritual journey of Lent that extends for forty days (excluding Sundays) through the night before Easter. During this period of self-examination, we are reminded of who we are and whose we are. We confront our own shortcomings and repent of our failure to be what God has created and called us to be. While Lent is a time of intense reflection, both individual and collectively, it is also a time of hope as we explore possibilities for new beginnings.*

– The Word & You

## GREETING TO WORSHIPERS

Rev. Dr. Paul R. Gilliam III

### PRELUDE

*I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*  
Anita Thompson, Piano

*arr. Fred Bock*

*Though you can easily pick out the tune of this familiar hymn, you probably wouldn't describe this arrangement as "pretty." Filled with discord and dissonance, the arranger reminds us that following Jesus is serious business, and often very, very difficult.*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Ms. Betty Joyner

Jesus came into the world, preaching the Gospel.  
He proclaimed, "The time has come! God's kingdom will soon be here.  
Turn back to God and believe the good news!"

**On this Ash Wednesday evening,  
we hear again the good news of the Gospel,  
and turn back to God.**

### +HYMN 500

*Just as I Am*  
Stanza 1

WOODWORTH

Just as I am, without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Mr. Lee Taylor Rose

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### SCRIPTURE READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Dr. Gilliam

This is the word of God for the people of God;  
**Thanks be to God.**

### HOMILY

*The Voice*

Dr. Gilliam

✠ ✠ ✠

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Hymn 500

*Just as I Am*  
Stanza 2

WOODWORTH

Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

## SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 51:1-17

Mrs. Nancy Freeman

This is the word of God for the people of God;  
**Thanks be to God.**

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Anita Thompson, Leader

Save us, O God, from blindness,  
which is not even aware that it is sinning. *(Silent prayer.)*  
Save us, O God, from pride,  
which cannot admit that it is wrong. *(Silent prayer.)*  
Save us, O God, from self-will,  
which can see nothing but its own way. *(Silent prayer.)*  
Save us, O God, from self-righteousness,  
which can see no flaw within itself. *(Silent prayer.)*  
Save us, O God, from callousness,  
which has sinned so often it has ceased to care. *(Silent prayer.)*  
Save us, O God, from defiance,  
which is not even sorry for its sins. *(Silent prayer.)*  
Save us, O God, from evasion,  
which always puts the blame on someone or something else. *(Silent prayer.)*  
Save us, O God, from hearts so hardened,  
that they cannot repent. *(Silent prayer.)*

Merciful God, give us at all times,  
eyes which are open to our faults;  
a conscience which is sensitive and quick to warn;  
a heart that cannot sin in peace, but is moved to regret and remorse.

Merciful God, grant that, being truly penitent, we may be truly forgiven.  
And being forgiven, may we know, and receive, and rejoice in this truth:  
Your love is wide enough to cover all of our sin.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hymn 500

*Just as I Am*  
Stanza 6

WOODWORTH

Just as I am, Thy love unknown hath broken every barrier down;  
Now, to be Thine, yea Thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

## IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*You are invited to come forward and receive the sign of the cross, either on your forehead or on the back of your hand.*

✠ ✠ ✠

+HYMN OF RESPONSE 497 *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*

ASSAM

+BENEDICTION

Dr. Gilliam

+LENTEN RESPONSE

arr. Mark Edwards

Jesus, keep me near the cross, there a precious fountain,  
Free to all, a healing stream, flows from Calv'ry's mountain.  
In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever,  
Till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.

+POSTLUDE *Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart*

arr. Phillip Keveren

+Those who are able are invited to stand.

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## OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Anita D. Thompson  
*Associate Pastor*

Rev. Dr. Paul R. Gilliam III  
*Pastor*

Rev. Dr. Jesse J. Croom  
*Pastor Emeritus*

Mrs. Leah Newsome  
*Pianist*