

Greenwood Forest
Baptist Church

February 22, 2023

Artist Statement Stardust

Lisle Gwynn Garrity | Inspired by Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Acrylic on raw canvas with digital drawing

Many of us begin Lent with ashen marks smudged against our foreheads, the oil glistening on our skin throughout the rest of the day. It's a mark that is holy because it tells the truth: we are formed from the dust, and to dust we shall one day return. We are not immortal. Death will one day find us all.

[But it's more than that.] Yes, death will surely find me one day, inhaling me into that infinite abyss. But the cross on my forehead only tells me part of the story. The empty tomb tells me a fuller, more expansive truth: death will not have the last word. There is more. God is more.

This expansive truth requires more of us. It invites us to abandon empty or showy practices of faith, and instead, draw inward to open ourselves to a deeper journey of transformation. It requires me to believe that I am truly worthy of love, belonging, and grace. It requires me to believe others are also.

What if, instead of ashes, gold gleamed on our foreheads? What if, alongside the certainty of death, we are also reminded of God's expansive grace? What if on this day we said to one another, "From stardust you have come, and to stardust you shall one day return"?



Order of Worship Ash Wednesday

† This icon indicates an invitation to stand or express reverence however you see fit.

Prelude

Welcome to Worship | *Rev. Lauren Efird*

Leader: The Lord be with you!

People: And also with you!

Call to Worship (A Sanctified Art)

Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome

We gather together at the edge of a new season.

We stand together on the cusp of something new.

Will we wade into self-reflection?

Will we invite honesty to dance?

Will we listen for God's invitation?

Will we seek deeper faith?

What kind of fast do we choose? What kind of faith will we build?

We gather together at the edge of a new season.

Listen, God is speaking.

Invocation | *Rev. Spears-Newsome*

† **Hymn** | *Just As I Am (Hymnal #500)*

Scripture Reading | *Isaiah 58* | *Rev. Spears-Newsome*

The word of God for us, the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Homily | *Johnny Jackson*

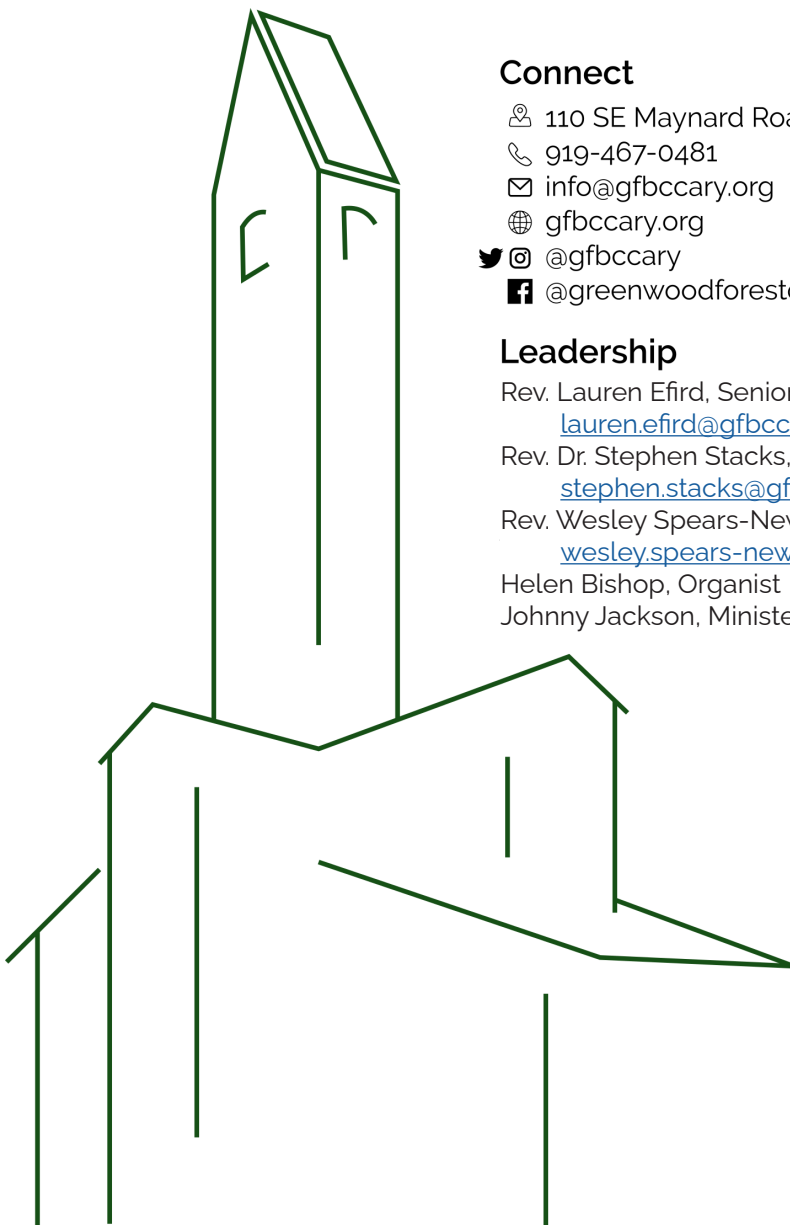
Imposition of Ashes

Lovely, Needy People | *The Many* | *Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks*

Declaration of Forgiveness | *Rev. Efird*

† **Hymn** | *I Take the Cross of Jesus Christ (Hymnal #168)*

Benediction | *Rev. Efird*



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