



Remember
all are of
the dust,
and all
turn to
dust again

Asbury United Methodist Church

Building a community of strength, hope and love.

Ash Wednesday Service

February 17, 2021

PRELUDE

GREETING

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

People: God's mercy endures for ever.

INVITATION TO THE LENTEN PRACTICE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

The early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, maker of every thing and judge of all that you have made, from the dust of the earth you have formed us and from the dust of death you would raise us up. By the redemptive power of the cross, create in us clean hearts and put within us a new spirit, that we may repent of our sins and lead lives worthy of your calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

* **HYMN** “Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days”

Lord, who throughout these forty days for us did fast and pray,
Teach us to overcome our sins, and close by You to stay.

As You with Satan did contend and did the vict'ry win,
O give us strength in You to fight, In You to conquer sin.

As You did hunger and did thirst, So teach us, gracious Lord,
To die to self, and only live By Your most holy word.

And through these days of penitence, And through Your Passion-tide,
For evermore, in life and death, O Lord, with us abide.

Abide with us that, when this life of suffering is past,
An Easter of unending joy we may attain at last!

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Sound the trumpet in Jerusalem! Raise the alarm on my holy mountain! Let everyone tremble in fear because the day of the Lord is upon us. It is a day of darkness and gloom, a day of thick clouds and deep blackness. Suddenly, like dawn spreading across the mountains, a great and mighty army appears. Nothing like it has been seen before or will ever be seen again.

That is why the Lord says, “Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Don’t tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish.

Who knows? Perhaps he will give you a reprieve, sending you a blessing instead of this curse. Perhaps you will be able to offer grain and wine to the Lord your God as before. Blow the ram's horn in Jerusalem! Announce a time of fasting; call the people together for a solemn meeting.

Gather all the people — the elders, the children, and even the babies. Call the bridegroom from his quarters and the bride from her private room. Let the priests, who minister in the Lord's presence, stand and weep between the entry room to the Temple and the altar.

Let them pray, "Spare your people, Lord! Don't let your special possession become an object of mockery. Don't let them become a joke for unbelieving foreigners who say, 'Has the God of Israel left them?'"

VISUAL MEDITATION

"Sacrifice"

SCRIPTURE LESSON

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it. For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation.

We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry. In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food. We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love. We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand

for attack and the left hand for defense. We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors. We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

*** HYMN**

“Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart, Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart, Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart, Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.

Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart, Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

*** GOSPEL LESSON**

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

“Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you give to someone in need, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you

pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

HOMILY

THANKSGIVING OVER THE 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, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

RESPONSIVE CONFESSION FROM PSALM 51

Leader: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

All: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

Leader: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

All: Against you, and only you, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgement.

Leader: Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

All: You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

Leader: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

All: Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

Leader: Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

All: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

Leader: Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

All: Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Leader: Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

All: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

Leader: For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

All: The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Amen.

Leader: Let us now silently confess our sins to God...

PARDON

Leader: May the almighty and merciful God, who desires not the death of a sinner but that we turn from wickedness and live, accept your repentance, forgive your sins, and restore you by the Holy Spirit to newness of life. Amen.

*** HYMN**

“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”

Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way;
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mould me and make me After Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way;
Search me and try me, Master, today.
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,
As in Thy presence humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way;
Wounded and weary, help me, I pray.
Power, all power, surely is Thine,
Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.

Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way;
Hold o'er my being Absolute sway.
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me.

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Music: Shirley Ruth French, Organist/Pianist
Scripture Readers: Dustin Heath, Denny Myers, Katie Dibell