

**MIFFLIN AVENUE
AND
SOUTH AVENUE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES**



**Ash Wednesday
February 17, 2021
7:00 pm**

Order of Worship

CENTERING

GATHERING WORDS:

As we begin this service, take a few moments to bring yourself before God – your present state of mind and preoccupations, as well as your desire to meet God during this time. Take time to still our hearts. Come to this quiet place, come to your Heavenly Father who is waiting for you. Come.

HYMN:

“Come and Find the Quiet Center”

TFWS #2128

PRAISING

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: For just such a time as this, we were made. In the image of God, loving, grace-giving, and wise, we are created to be the hands, hearts, and feet of divinity.

People: **We gather on this Ash Wednesday, not because we must, not to puff ourselves up, but to start out on the trail leading to the resurrection.**

OPENING HYMN

“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”

No. 297

OPENING PRAYER

God of dust and ash, you fashioned us from the dust of the earth, and to dust we shall return. Draw us back to you, O God, for you are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Heal the hardness of our hearts, that we may be faithful disciples of the one who makes all things new. Amen.

INTROIT

“Jesus, Remember Me

No. 488

CONFESSING

CALL TO CONFESSION

God begs us to turn from those words, those acts, and those obstacles that keep us from being God’s people. As we begin our Lenten journey, I invite you to join with me, with words and in silence, as we bring our brokenness to God who desires to make us whole.

A LITANY OF PENITENCE

People: **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.**

Pastor: We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

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

Pastor: 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.

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

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

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

Pastor: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people. Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

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

Pastor: Our excessive love of worldly goods and comforts and our dishonesty in daily life and work

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

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

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

Pastor: 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.

People: **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

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

People: Accept our repentance, Lord.

Pastor: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

People: Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Pastor: Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

People: that we may show forth your glory in the world.

Pastor: By the cross and passion of our Son, our Lord,

People: bring us with all your saints to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Pastor: God lets go of the punishment we deserve and gives us mercy in its place. Willingly, God puts a new spirit into us, the spirit of hope and joy.

People: We will sing to the One who has delivered us from our sins. We will praise God with cleansed hearts. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF ASSURANCE

"He Touched Me

No. 367

HEARING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Pastor: O Lord, open our eyes, our ears, our minds, and our hearts;

People: that we might behold wondrous things out of your word.

FIRST LESSON

Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17

Pastor: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Pastor: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Pastor: The Lord be with you,

People: And also with you.

Pastor: A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

THE GOSPEL IS READ

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

THE GOSPEL RESPONSE

Pastor: The Gospel of the living Christ.

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

PROCLAIMING

HOMILY

"Dust, Dirt and Bridges"

Russel W. Shuluga

RESPONDING

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE

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.

SENDING

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastor: Children of God, you are loved. You are called, you are chosen and you are redeemed.

People: Though we have done nothing to deserve it, we have been given free and unconditional mercy.

Pastor: May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, fill you and change you as you draw nearer to Christ and the cross this Lenten Season. Go now and live in the truth of the gospel, Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

"Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

No. 301



Remember man
that you are
dust and into
dust you shall
return.