



Ash Wednesday Service
February 17, 2021
7:00 PM
Find us on YouTube: [harmonyumcva](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvYmCvA)

*Prior to the start of the service,
gather dirt from your yard or garden for use during the service.*

GATHERING IN SILENCE

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—
who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.
Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for your sins have been your downfall!
Bring your confessions and return to the Lord. —Psalm 103:1–4, NRSV; adaptation of Hosea 14:1

HYMN OF INVITATION

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy

UMH 340

Refrain:

*I will arise and go to Jesus;
he'll embrace me with his arms;
in the arms of my dear Savior,*

*1. Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
full of pity, love, and power. [No refrain]*

*2. Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify;
true belief and true repentance
every grace that brings you nigh. [Refrain]*

*4. Let not conscience make you linger,
nor of fitness fondly dream;
all the fitness he requireth
is to feel your need of him. [Refrain]*

*3. Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
lost and ruined by the fall;
if you tarry till you're better,
you will never come at all. [Refrain]*

PRAYER

O God, maker of everything and judge of all that you have made, from the dust of the earth you 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 worth of your calling, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHORAL ANTHEM

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

An Army of Locusts

2 Blow the trumpet in Zion;

 sound the alarm on my holy hill.

Let all who live in the land tremble,

 for the day of the Lord is coming.

It is close at hand—

 a day of darkness and gloom,

 a day of clouds and blackness.

Like dawn spreading across the mountains

 a large and mighty army comes,

such as never was in ancient times

 nor ever will be in ages to come.

Rend Your Heart

¹² “Even now,” declares the Lord,

 “return to me with all your heart,

 with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

¹³ Rend your heart

 and not your garments.

Return to the Lord your God,

 for he is gracious and compassionate,

slow to anger and abounding in love,

 and he relents from sending calamity.

¹⁴ Who knows? He may turn and relent

 and leave behind a blessing—

grain offerings and drink offerings

 for the Lord your God.

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion,

 declare a holy fast,

 call a sacred assembly.

¹⁶ Gather the people,

 consecrate the assembly;

bring together the elders,

gather the children,
those nursing at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her chamber.
¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister before the Lord,
weep between the portico and the altar.
Let them say, "Spare your people, Lord.
Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn,
a byword among the nations.
Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Giving to the Needy

6 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Prayer

⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

ASH WEDNESDAY REFLECTION

Dust to Dust

Pastor Debra

INVITATION TO OBSERVE A HOLY LENT

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. To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now turn to our Creator and Redeemer.

A BRIEF SILENCE IS KEPT

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that this dirt we hold in our hands 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.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

CONFESSION

In silence, each person offers personal prayers of confession.

PARDON

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

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Lord, Holy One, have mercy on us, for without your mercy and grace, we would be dust. As we enter into this Lenten season, be near to us. Help us, by your Holy Spirit, to feel right conviction and repentance for our sin. Help us, by your Spirit, to have the strength to overcome sin.

Thank you, Lord, that Easter is coming! Death has no sting, no victory, because of Jesus! Glory and honor and praise to His name! Thank you for rescuing us. Help us keep both the weight and the joy of this season in our hearts as we move through the next several weeks. Help us bear the good fruit of your Spirit.

Thank you that the cross marked on our forehead I dirt do not symbolize our ultimate reality. From dust we might have been formed, but our bodies, our spirits, ourselves, await beautiful redemption and the restoration of all things. Help us long and look forward to that day, and let it come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

HYMN

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

UMH 269

*Lord, who throughout these forty days
for us didst fast and pray,
teach us with thee to mourn our sins
and close by thee to stay.*

*As thou with Satan didst contend,
and didst the victory win,
O give us strength in thee to fight,
in thee to conquer sin.*

*As thou didst hunger bear, and thirst,
so teach us, gracious Lord,
to die to self, and chiefly live
by thy most holy word.*

*And through these days of penitence,
and through thy passiontide,
yea, evermore in life and death,
Jesus, with us abide.*

*Abide with us, that so, this life
of suffering over past,
an Easter of unending joy
we may attain at last.*

CLOSING PRAYER

O God, our deliverer, you led your people of old through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide now the people of your church, that following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

POSTLUDE