

Mifflin Avenue and South Avenue United Methodist Churches



March 5, 2025

Ash Wednesday

7:00 pm

ORDER OF WORSHIP

CELEBRATION THROUGH CENTERING

PRELUDE AND BRINGING FORTH THE LIGHT

GATHERING WORDS

Pastor: In the quiet of the night, in the comfort of darkness we come to you, O Lord. We come for peace; we come for comfort; we come for forgiveness and love.

HYMN 'Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley' TFWS NO. 2112, V. 2

***We must walk---this lonesome valley;
We have to walk---it by ourselves.
Oh, nobody else---can walk it for us;
we have to walk---it by ourselves.***

Pastor: O Lord, hear our prayer...
(Silence)

Pastor: In the softness of evening, in the solace of silence we come to you, O Lord. We come for acceptance; we come for community; we come for forgiveness and love.

HYMN 'Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley' TFWS NO. 2112, V. 2

***We must walk---this lonesome valley;
We have to walk---it by ourselves.
Oh, nobody else---can walk it for us;
we have to walk---it by ourselves.***

Pastor: O Lord, hear our prayer...
(Silence)

Pastor: In the serenity of day's end, in the restfulness of worship, we come to you, O Lord. We come to you for respite; we come to you for completion; we come to you for forgiveness and love.

HYMN 'Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley' TFWS No. 2112, V. 2

***We must walk---this lonesome valley;
We have to walk---it by ourselves.
Oh, nobody else---can walk it for us;
we have to walk---it by ourselves.***

Pastor: O Lord, hear our prayer...
(Silence)

OPENING PRAYER

On this day, merciful God, we begin a journey of repentance, a journey of renewal, a journey of healing. Sometimes this journey is hard. We often don't know where we are going. Help us remember that we follow in the footsteps of your Son, Jesus, our guide and guardian. Help us to be faithful on this day and all days. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

HYMN 'The Old Rugged Cross' No. 504

CELEBRATION THROUGH THE WORD

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.

CHORAL RESPONSE

'Thy Word'

No. 601 (Refrain only)

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

FIRST LESSON

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

'Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus'

No. 349

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.*

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.

*GLORIA PATRI

No. 70

CELEBRATION THROUGH PROCLAMATION

SERMON

'Removing the Mask'

Rev. Russel Shuluga

ANTHEM

'Dust and Ashes'

David Haas

CELEBRATION THROUGH CONFESSION AND PARDON

CALL TO CONFESSION

Pastor: Come humbly and make your confessions in the assurance God hears and forgives.

People: We are unworthy of the love shown to us in Christ; yet God calls, and so we come in the faith.

Pastor: God accepts us and wants our living to be as holy as possible without artificial display.

People: From the depths of our hearts we expose ourselves to God for what we truly are and pray that we may be cleansed for faithful discipleship.

HYMN

'Heal Me, Hands of Jesus'

No. 262, Vs. 1 & 2

LITANY OF CONFESSION

Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth,

have mercy on us.

Incarnate Word, redeemer of the world,

have mercy on us.

Abiding Spirit, giver of light and life,

have mercy on us.

For turning away from your presence, for disobeying your word and commandments,

forgive us,

Lord. For trusting in our own strength instead of yours, for betraying your trust and the trust of others,

forgive us, Lord.

For resisting your grace and refusing your blessings, for holding back from proclaiming our faith in you,

forgive us, Lord.

For damaging this earth and exploiting its creatures, for neglecting and wasting the gifts you have given us,

forgive us, Lord.

For failing to forgive as we have been forgiven. for judging others and bearing grudges,

forgive us, Lord.

For skimping on our commitments and relationships, for failing in hospitality,

forgive us, Lord.

For tolerating oppression, injustice, and wrong, for keeping silent when we should have spoken up,

forgive us, Lord.

For turning away when others have offered us love, for closing our hearts when others have needed compassion,

forgive us, Lord.

For all we have done unkindly, unjustly and dishonestly, for our careless speech and hurtful words,

forgive us, Lord.

Most merciful God, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

With our hearts turned to God in repentance, with the knowledge of our sins laid bare before the cross of Jesus Christ, in the name of the living God, your sins are forgiven. Receive God's mercy, take hold of your forgiveness, and, in the power of the Holy Spirit walk in the light of Christ. Amen

HYMN OF ASSURANCE

'Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross'

No. 301, Vs. 1 & 2

SHARING THE PEACE

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.

We meet in his name and share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you

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

SILENT PRAYER

HYMN

'Sing Out! We're Made of Common Dust'
(CANONBURY 8.8.8.8 ("Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak"))

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

***Sing out! We're made of common dust;
One day, to dust we shall return!
Yet, God, you've placed your mark on us
And so for you our spirits yearn.***

***This gift of ashes we receive
Reminds us we belong to you.
You call us to repent, believe,
and seek your Way in all we do.***

***The dust and dirt of children's play,
of youthful times, of working years
Are part of life — and life's decay;
We wash the dust with sorrow's tears.***

***We sing, O God, of what you give:
This ash reminds us we are yours.
In life we're claimed, in death we live!
In Christ our life, your love endures.***

THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES

Blessed are you, God of all creation. You are eternal, we are mortal, formed from the dust of the earth. As we receive these ashes, make them a sign for us of repentance and returning to you. Breathe into us again the breath of life. Blessed be God for ever. **Amen.**

ANTHEM

'Ashes to Ashes'

Dan Schutte

Come, receive the sign of ashes.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

(During the singing of the hymn, you are invited to come forward for the imposition of ashes)

HYMN

'Just as I Am, Without One Plea'

No. 357

***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.***

***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.***

***Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.***

*Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need in thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*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.*

CELEBRATION THROUGH SENDING

***BENEDICTION**

Go forth to begin again. Go to walk this journey of faith with Jesus Christ, knowing that God's grace goes with you. Go in peace. Amen.



***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

'Danish Amen'

No. 898

A-men, a-men, a – men.

***RECESSIONAL HYMN**

'Beneath the Cross of Jesus'

No. 297

***POSTLUDE**

WE TAKE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD