



## Ash Wednesday

### LENT 2021

Our church theme this year is: Offering Christ, Community and Compassion. During the Lent and Easter seasons, we will highlight Offering Compassion. Paul encourages us to “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another...” (Colossians 3:12-13a). We step into our calling as disciples when compassionate hearts reach out to address human suffering as Jesus taught and modeled throughout his ministry. Lent is a church season of self-examination as Christ calls each of us to deny self, take up the Cross and follow. Such spiritual examination leads to a fuller revelation of resurrection.

### ORDER OF WORSHIP

#### GATHERING

We gather on this day following Shrove Tuesday – following a time of great laughter and amusement. We gather to intentionally focus on a journey that leads us to a deeper relationship with God and a greater service to others. This set aside season is designed to grow us in the spiritual disciplines of the faith. As you physically walk these 40 days of Lent, may you also spiritually journey to a deeper understanding of our call for a life of fasting and simplicity – a time of cleansing and renewing – a call to live more compassionate lives – in a call for service to others and worship.

#### Prelude

#### Silent Procession of the Cross

#### Call to Worship

(adapted from the hymn *God of all Compassion*)

God of all compassion, guide us on our way through our Lenten journey, on toward Easter Day.

Signed with the cross, we walk each step with you. God of all compassion, guide our hearts to serve.

God of all compassion, Author of our days; fashioned in your image we, for love, were made.

Body and mind and spirit give you praise: God of all Compassion, guide our hearts to serve.

Singing of your goodness, confident in grace we embrace your promise – ev’ry time and place.

Love freely giv’n flows from the cross of Christ, God of all compassion, guide our hearts to serve.

Longing for your presence, we in stillness pray for your healing touch, Lord, now and ev’ry day.

Merciful Savior, Source of life renewed, God of all compassion, guide our hearts to serve.

Giver of all bounty, teach us how to share love’s redeeming message, gifted through your care.

Blessed by your mission, charity we learn; God of all compassion, guide our hearts to serve.

## Prayer of Confession

**Merciful God,**  
**You pardon all that truly repent and turn to you.**  
**We humbly confess our sins and ask your mercy.**  
**We have been hard-hearted and tight-fisted toward our neighbors in need.**  
**We have not brought the homeless into our houses.**  
**We have not fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and visited the captive.**  
**We have not moved to change the structures that bind and oppress.**  
**Have mercy on us, O God, in your loving-kindness.**  
**Forgive us our sins and help us to live in your light.**  
**May we turn our festivals into celebrations of your justice;**  
**May we share our soup and bread with open hearts and hands;**  
**May our light break forth and our healing spring up quickly;**  
**All to your Glory, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.**

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.  
I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.  
May the God of mercy, who forgives you all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness,  
and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

## PROCLAMATION

### New Testament Lesson

1 Peter 3:8-18a

Rick Clayton

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. For “Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you;

yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God.

### Reflection

“Offering Compassion”

Rick Clayton

## RESPONSE

We gather to commit our lives to forty days of spiritual discipline.

**We seek to know your ways, O Lord, and to follow you.**

We come committing our lives to dedicated prayer and daily bible reading.

**We need the inspiration of your Holy Spirit and your sustaining grace and love.**

We desire to journey to spiritual maturity in our relationship to you and others.

**We listen with ready hearts to serve you in all we do.**

## Invitation to the Observance of the Lenten Discipline

### 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 we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

### Imposition of Ashes

## GOING FORTH

### Hymn

*Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes*  
THE FAITH WE SING Hymnal

No. 2138

Sunday's palms are Wednesday's ashes as another Lent begins;  
thus we kneel before our Maker in contrition for our sins.

We have marred baptismal pledges, in rebellion gone astray;  
now, returning, seek forgiveness; grant us pardon, God, this day!

We have failed to love our neighbors, their offences to forgive,  
have not listened to their troubles, nor have cared just how they live,  
we are jealous, proud, impatient, loving over much our things;  
may the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.

We are hasty to judge others, blind to proof of human need;  
and our lack of understanding demonstrates our inner greed;  
we have wasted earth's resources; want and suffering we've ignored;  
come and cleanse us, then restore us; make new hearts within us, Lord!

### Benediction

### Postlude

\*stand as you are able

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### Service Participants

Rev. Rick Clayton, Rev. Adam Charville, Rev. Molly White,  
Mr. Stephen Aber, Mr. Mike Trexler