



The season of Lent calls Christians to embrace the faith journey by reflecting upon and deepening their relationship with God and by acting upon their Christian beliefs.

Although often considered a time for giving up something as a way of symbolizing Jesus' sacrifice and his struggle in the wilderness, the forty days of Lent also offer an opportunity for taking up.

During this season, we are invited to thoughtfully take up the gifts of faith—worship, study, prayer, and service—in preparation for Holy Week and Christ's journey to the cross.

**May all our actions, prayers, silence, and pauses
call us into further relationship with You.**

Debra Matthies, Liturgist
Rev. Clarissa L. Martinelli, Senior Pastor

"No Matter Who You Are or Where You Are on Life's Journey, You're Welcome Here"

***Note: L: denotes worship Leader ~ P: denotes People**

~GATHERING GOD'S PEOPLE~

PRELUDE: "More Like You" by Scott Wesley Brown

Vicki Roth, Pianist

~ WORDS OF WELCOME ~

GREETING:

Pastor: Welcome! On this Transfiguration Sunday, we conclude our Candle sermon series. Fifth Ave. United Methodist Church we are light bearers, a committed movement bringing the light of Jesus to the hardest, darkest, and most forgotten places in the world. We are not afraid of the dark places — the light of Christ shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Come, people of God; hold out your illuminating candle for all to see it. Take your candle, and go light your world!

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CENTERING MUSIC:

“Come Holy Spirit”

Mark Foreman

***HYMN**

“Sanctuary” x3

TFWS 2164

***CALLED TO WORSHIP: (Responsively)**

L: This Lenten journey is a process, a commitment, a labor of love.

P: We must be prepared for resurrection.

We must wait for it with penitent hearts.

L: With ashes we are marked to remind us of our mortality,

P: to remind us of our desperate need of God’s eternal life.

L: With dust we are sealed into the ground from which we came.

P: But from that same ground, that empty tomb, comes new life.

L: But not yet. We must wait in prayer. We must wait in penitence. We must wait in patience.

Resurrection is coming. But not yet. We must prepare. We must wait.

P: First comes the journey to which Christ calls us.

L: Come, let us begin this Lenten journey.

***PRAYER: (Unison)**

All: Merciful God, here we are - the ashes are ready to be smeared; the songs are ready to be sung; our sins are ready to be confessed; our Savior, we are ready to follow. The day of the Lord is coming, and, before it, we are trembling for the journey is long and it requires much: honesty, humility, trust, compassion, and patience. Through the power of your Spirit, guide us that we may be filled with these gifts and follow your Son with sure feet and welcome resurrection when it gifts us with her presence. Amen.

***CALL TO CONFESSION:**

L: God desires that we return with all our heart. Let us turn together from that which keeps us from God to that which brings us closer to God’s will.

***CONFESSION: (Unison)**

All: Have mercy on us, O Lord, according to your steadfast love, blot out that which has kept us from you - the sins of things we have done, and the sins of things we have left undone. Wash us for our sin is ever before you. Any sin against a fellow brother or sister is, in fact, a sin against you and, for that, we beg your forgiveness. Through your power alone can we be

made clean. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within us. We crave your forgiveness and have no hope in this life - or the next - without it. Forgive us, Lord, and our lips will declare your praise! This we pray in your holy and merciful name. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON:**

L: Psalm 51 tells us that the sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit. Together, we have confessed the broken things within us and God's mercy has restored our souls. I proclaim to you this day; our sins have been forgiven. **Amen.**

***HYMN:** "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian" UMH 402

***~WE PROCLAIM~**

Joel 2:1-2, 12-14~Easy-to-Read Version (ERV) (Unison)

Blow the trumpet on Zion. Shout a warning on my holy mountain. Let all the people who live in the land shake with fear. The Lord's special day is coming; it is near. It will be a dark, gloomy day. It will be a dark and cloudy day. At sunrise you will see the army spread over the mountains. It will be a great and powerful army. There has never been anything like it before, and there will never be anything like it again. This is the Lord's message: "Now come back to me with all your heart. Cry and mourn, and don't eat anything! Show that you are sad for doing wrong. Tear your hearts, not your clothes." Come back to the Lord your God. He is kind and merciful. He does not become angry quickly. He has great love. Maybe he will change his mind about the bad punishment he planned. Who knows, maybe he will change his mind and leave behind a blessing for you. Then you can give grain and drink offerings to the Lord your God.

***Matthew 6:19-21~ The Voice (VOICE) (Unison)**

Some people store up treasures in their homes here on earth. This is a shortsighted practice—don't undertake it. Moths and rust will eat up any treasure you may store here. Thieves may break into your homes and steal your precious trinkets. Instead, put up your treasures in heaven where moths do not attack, where rust does not corrode, and where thieves are barred at the door. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

L: The Word of God for the people of God. P: Praise to the Living Word.

SERMON: "ASH WEDNESDAY HOMILY" Pastor Clarissa

~INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE~

~ASH WEDNESDAY GREAT THANKSGIVING~

~ INVITATION OF STEWARDSHIP~

***OFFERTORY PRAYER: (Unison)**

All: Redeeming God, we enter this holy season of Lent, repenting of our self-centeredness and our need to be affirmed by the people around us more than by our God and creator. We bring our gifts to you in the hope that they will be given and used in a way that is seen only by you

and a joy that pleases your heart. We pray this in the name of Jesus, our savior and guide.
Amen. (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21)

***CLOSING HYMN:** **“Since Jesus Came into My Heart”** **TFWS 2140**

~ **CHARGE & BENEDICTION** ~

L: May God, who has forgiven and fed us, now make us strong for these days ahead. May Jesus lead us, and we be found faithful to follow. May the Spirit drive us into the wilderness, burning away the chaff of our lives, and purifying our hearts for all to see and be blessed.

Pastor: And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Mercy, Master, and Fire, be with us and remain with us always! Go in peace, to love and serve God and your neighbor.

***POSTLUDE:** **“Taste and See”** **James Moore**

~ **INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE** ~

Pastor. 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.

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.

The congregation is invited to come forward for the imposition of ashes.

~ASH WEDNESDAY GREAT THANKSGIVING~

L: The Lord be with you. **And also, with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

God of all goodness and grace, we have gathered on this solemn night, to smear our foreheads with ashes, and to be bluntly reminded of our mortality. You formed us from dust and to dust we shall return. Even amidst the somberness of this evening, we give you thanks for calling us your children. We give you thanks for calling us on this journey. We remember on this dark evening, that we are human and you alone are God.

Pastor: In this season of Lent, we gather on a journey of trust - trust that your creation does not end with our death. Indeed, your creation knows no boundaries, and, yet, we are bound inevitably to your will and your Word. With all creation, in every time and place, we join the everlasting chorus:

People: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

Standing between past and future, we remember the journey we will take again while we wait for that blessed Easter. We remember Jesus' birth into poverty. We remember how he grew up in wisdom and in years - how he invited disciples to follow him, how he stood up to the powers that be, how he touched the sinner and challenged the saint, how he preached good news to the poor and marginalized, how he cared as much for people's bodies as he did their souls.

We remember how he gathered his friends on the night he was betrayed, how he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying: "take, eat, do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, he took the cup and, pouring it, said: "this is the cup of salvation, shed in my blood, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

For as long as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the resurrection of our living savior until he comes again.

Together, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Gracious God, we give you thanks for your gifts of bread and juice and ask that they may transform us to your presence. We give you thanks that, even though we will return to dust, you nevertheless invite us to this meal as a friend.

Though we are not worthy of the grace received here, we are invited as the most beloved of companions. Send your Spirit to abide with us that we may abide with you.

Through Christ, in Christ, with Christ, all glory and honor are yours, Holy God, both now and forever. **Amen.**