

**ORDER of WORSHIP**  
**Ash Wednesday**  
**February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.”  
Psalm 51:10-11 (RSV)

***Greeting and Welcome***

***Prelude Music***

***Call to Worship*** (Based on Joel 2)

Come, young and old . . . Sanctify yourselves before the Lord.

**We gather to hear the word of God.**

Come, and do not delay . . . Return to God.

**We gather to be in the presence of God.**

Come, cry out to God . . . Trust in God’s mercy.

**We gather to renew our spirits,  
as we acknowledge our failings before God.**

***Opening Prayer*** (Based on Joel 2)

**We turn to you, God of life, on this first day of Lent, as we recall our own mortality. With hearts torn open by our actions, we need your guidance and your healing forgiveness. Ready us to receive your mercy and grace, and cleanse us of the ash of human failing, that we may embrace the words you speak—words that lead to eternal life. Amen.**

***Opening Hymn***

“Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days”

UMH #269

Words: Claudia F. Herman, 1873. Music: USA folk melody; arr: by Annabel Morris Buchanan, 1938.  
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1. 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.
2. As thou with Satan didst contend,  
and didst the victory win,  
O give us strength in thee to fight,  
in thee to conquer sin.
3. As thou didst hunger, bear, and thirst,  
so teach us, gracious Lord,  
to die to self, and chiefly live  
by thy most holy word.
4. And through these days of penitence,  
and through thy passion-tide,  
yea, evermore in life and death,  
Jesus, with us abide.

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

### ***Prayer/The Lord's Prayer***

#### ***Scripture Reading***

Psalm 51:1-17

- <sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.
- <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.
- <sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.
- <sup>4</sup> Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless when you pass judgement.
- <sup>5</sup> Indeed, I was born guilty,  
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- <sup>6</sup> You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- <sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
- <sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.
- <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right\* spirit within me.
- <sup>11</sup> Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- <sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing\* spirit.
- <sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.
- <sup>14</sup> Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,  
O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.
- <sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- <sup>16</sup> For you have no delight in sacrifice;  
if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased.
- <sup>17</sup> The sacrifice acceptable to God\* is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

The Word of God for the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

***Reflection***

“Accident Forgiveness”

Rev. Matthew Sergent

***Special Music***

Dee Leggett

***Invitation to the Observance of the Lenten Discipline***

***Thanksgiving Over the Ashes***

*Note:* If you came to the church and picked up a Lenten Bag for the season of Lent, you will have a small package of ashes you can use for this portion of the service. If you do not have ashes, you can still participate by making the sign of the cross on your forehead with your thumb or finger.

***Imposition of Ashes or Making the Sign of the Cross***

*Note:* With your ashes, place them on your forehead or on the forehead of your family members by making the sign of the cross while saying: **“Repent and believe in the gospel”** or **“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”**

***Prayer of Confession*** (Based on Psalm 51)

**O God, we have turned from you in our hearts, minds and actions. We feel the distance we create when we look away. Whether our turning was deliberate or gradual, conscious or almost unawares, we return to you now with contrite hearts. We open our lives before you and seek your gracious forgiveness. We confess our need to return to you, to turn toward you as we journey in Lent toward Easter and the hope of resurrection. Amen.**

***Words of Assurance*** (Based on Psalm 51)

Through grace and forgiveness, the Lord restores the joy of our salvation and sustains in us a willing spirit. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.**

***Closing Hymn***

“Lord, I Want to be a Christian”

UMH #402

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1. Lord, I want to be a Christian  
in my heart, in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.
2. Lord, I want to be more loving  
in my heart, in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.
3. Lord, I want to be more holy  
in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.

4. Lord, I want to be like Jesus  
in my heart, in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

***Dismissal with Blessing*** (Based on 2 Corinthian 6)

Though we were overwhelmed by sorrow,  
**we can rejoice in Christ.**  
Though we were dead,  
**we are alive in Christ.**  
Though we had nothing,  
**we possess everything in Christ.**  
In Christ, the day of deliverance has dawned!

***Postlude***