

Ash Wednesday



Donelson Heights UMC

February 17, 2021

Call to Prayer

“I Need Thee Every Hour”

p. 397 UMH

I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord; no tender voice like thine can peace afford.

I need thee, O I need thee; every hour I need thee; O bless me now, my Savior, I come to thee.

Opening Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

— From the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. Public domain



Read Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Prayer of Confession

Lord, I confess my sins before you. I confess that I have fallen short of your glory and your intent for my life. Open my eyes that I may see myself with clarity and truthfulness, that I may have eyes to see all of that within me that is not pleasing to you.



Read 2 Corinthians 5:20b – 6:10

Prayer of Confession

Lord, I confess to you that I have not loved you as I should. I have been impatient with others with whom I could have been patient. I have disregarded those you have called me to serve. I have chosen the selfish way when you have called me to selflessness.



Read Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Prayer of Confession

Lord, I confess that I have not tended to the care of my soul. I have been too busy to pray, too greedy to give and too selfish to fast. I have been too quick to speak and too slow to listen for you. I have filled my life with all kinds of noise instead of patiently waiting to hear your voice.

Personal Litany

“Forgive Us, Lord”

p. 2134 The Faith We Sing

Forgive us Lord:

For grievance and injustice, aloofness and indifference;

For weakness and transgression, resistance and rebellion;

In your eternal mercy; in your sustaining grace;

Forgive us Lord.

Prayer

“Sunday’s Palms are Wednesday’s Ashes” p. 2138 The Faith We Sing

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 for forgiveness; grant us pardon, God this day!

We have failed to love our neighbors, their offenses to forgive, have not listened to their troubles, not 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 resource want and suffering we’ve ignored; come and cleanse of, then restore us; make new hearts within us, Lord!

Read Psalm 51:1-17

Invitation to Observation of Lent

BOW 322

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The early Christians observed with great devotion the days of the Lord’s passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a 40-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.

You are invited, 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.

Remembrance and Thanksgiving Over the Ashes

Almighty God you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that these ashes may be 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.

“Remember, you are dust” and “Repent and believe the Gospel”.

Personal Petition

“I Surrender All”

p. 354 UMH

All to Jesus I Surrender; all to him I freely give; I will ever love and trust him. In his presence daily live. I surrender all, I surrender all, all to thee my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

Declaration of Pardon and Peace

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Our loving Creator does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their distorted lives and live. Therefore, may God grant us true repentance that those things we do this day may be done faithfully, and that we may come to know God's eternal joy; through Christ Jesus. Go in peace, to love and serve God and your neighbor.

Closing Prayer

May God who has forgiven us and fed us, make us strong from 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. And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Mercy, Master and Fire be with us and remain with us always! Amen!

Devotion Adapted from the **United Methodist Book of Worship: Service for Ash Wednesday**