

humanity. Help us resist the temptation to wash away the dust, for we know that it was from the dust itself that you created us. Wash our hearts and mark us with ashes on the outside that we might be made clean on the inside. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN *Take Time to Be Holy* UMH 395

*BENEDICTION (*adapted from Psalm 51, 2 Corinthians 5-6, Matthew 6*)
Go forth on your heart's journey, strong in the face of afflictions, speaking truth, and knowing that you are loved well by God. Go in peace. Amen.

*CHORAL RESPONSE *Creator of the Earth and Skies* UMH 450

POSTLUDE *Parting* Felix Mendelssohn

**Please stand as able*

Special Notes about Ash Wednesday

*Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter: we confront our own mortality and confess our sin before God within the community of faith. The form and content of the service focus on the dual themes of sin and death in the light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship, and the Imposition of Ashes can be a powerful nonverbal and experiential way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation. This practice is the historic focus of Ash Wednesday observance and gave the day its name.

*Discipleship Ministries of The United Methodist Church
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/a-service-of-worship-for-ash-wednesday>

Serving in Worship:

Readers: Joel Chermonte, John Vas
Greeters: Charlene and John Vas
Ushers: Sarah Jackson, Beth Cruz
Organist: Marlene Dirksen
Choir Director: Gabriela Martinez
Audio/Video Elements: John and Michelle Wolter, Phil Wolter

North Olmsted United Methodist Church



Feeding the Community –
Body, Mind, and Spirit

4600 Dover Center Road,
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070
440-779-6634 + www.noumc.org
Rev. Hoyte Wilhelm, Pastor

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 22, 2023

7:00 p.m.

GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

WELCOME

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST (*in silence*)

The Lenten journey is a time to rediscover, with God's help, our honest, quiet, and secret hearts, confident that God sees in secret. This inward journey may require courage, but it also produces strength to face the world's afflictions with truthful speech, righteousness, and even joy: having nothing and yet possessing everything. Let us greet one another with signs of Christ's peace.

PRELUDE *Prelude on Repton* Parry/arr. Powell

CHORAL INTROIT *Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days* UMH 269

*CALL TO WORSHIP (*adapted from Psalm 51*)

L: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your mercy.
P: Wash and cleanse us thoroughly, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your mercy.
L: You desire inward truth, O God.

P: Therefore teach us wisdom in the secret places of our hearts, according to your steadfast love, according to your mercy. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN *Sweet Hour of Prayer* UMH 496

*OPENING PRAYER (*adapted from Joel 2, Psalm 51, 2 Corinthians 5-6*)

We turn our faces toward you in a special way today, O God, seeking wisdom for the Lenten journey ahead and for the paths we walk in life. Center our spirits this day for an inward journey of reconciliation to our true selves, and thus to you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

PRAYERS AND GIFTS WITH GOD

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*adapted from Psalm 51*)

The commitment you seek, O God, seems out of reach. We imagine that to properly serve you, we must be holy, overtly spiritual, and confident in our faith. In our eyes, we are none of these things. Remind us, Holy One, by the simple touch of ash this day, that the journey you have in mind is accessible to us all, and requires only a desire to find the secret heart of truth within ourselves. Lead on, O God, and journey with us, we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (*adapted from Matthew 6, Joel 2, 2 Corinthians 5-6*)

Jesus assures us that God especially loves a humble prayer, a secret prayer. God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. Now is the acceptable time. Be reconciled to God. Amen.

INVITATION FOR THE OFFERING

Lord, as we worship you through our tithes and offerings, help us. Help us to give with a sincere heart. Help us, Lord. Help us not to bring attention to ourselves through our giving, but to place attention on your goodness by our obedience. Help us, Lord. In our poverty, help us not to be stingy with our substance; in our wealth, help us not to be cheap in our charity. But help us Lord. Help us to surrender to you what is needed to bless others, with a treasured heart that gives cheerfully and gladly. Help us, Lord, that you would be pleased with our gifts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Evening Prayer

Flor Peeters

*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

*OFFERING PRAYER

ANTHEM

An Hour of Hallowed Peace

Steve Danyew

THE WORD OF GOD IN PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORD (*adapted from Joel 2, Psalm 51*)

Open your ears to hear the trumpet that calls us back to God. Open your eyes to see the ashes that call us back to God. Open your souls in prayer to feel the longing that calls us back to God. Open your hearts once again to the love that calls us back to God.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 51; Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

RESPONSE TO THE WORD (*adapted from Matthew 6, Psalm 51, 2 Corinthians 5-6*)

God of heart, God of steadfast love, make our spirits right, make our witness strong. Amen.

HYMN OF PREPARATION *Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes*

TFWS 2138

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES (*adapted from Joel 2, Ps. 51, 2 Cor. 5-6*)

God says: "Return to me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow; tear your hearts and not your clothing. Return, for God is merciful and compassionate, very patient, full of faithful love, and ready to forgive." In the forty days ahead, may you search yourself and find truth, may you seek truth and speak it, and may you have nothing and yet possess everything. However you observe this season, let the journey start with humble ashes, marking hand, face, and spirit—signifying our commitment and openness to being found anew by God.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES (*in unison*)

Merciful God, you ask us to rend our hearts, not our clothing. In the dust of these ashes, we come face-to-face with the shortcomings of our own