

shortcomings of our own 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 Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days UMH 269*

***Benediction**

Created from dust, held together by God's extravagant love, we turn away from sin, and leave today embracing God's love.

Postlude *O Day of Peace* Charles Callahan

**Please stand if you are able.*

ABOUT ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a season of forty days (minus Sundays) during which we prepare ourselves for the events of Holy Week and Easter. We start the journey of Lent with confession, pardon, and the imposition of ashes, a reminder of our mortality. Though this can often feel like a serious service, as Psalm 51:1 says, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love." We will begin Lent with the reminder that God's love is steadfast—it never fails. In words like those of Coldplay's "Fix You," God's love is like a light that guides us home, ignites our bones, and fixes us, putting us back together for relationship with God and one another.

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4V3Mo61fJM>

Serving in Worship

Pastor: Rev. Hoyte L. Wilhelm

Liturgist: Joel Chermonte

Organist: Javier Gonzalez

Choir Director: Gabriela Martinez

Greeter: Jean Scothon

Ushers: John and Char Vas

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

Ash Wednesday

March 5, 2025 7:00 pm

GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Welcome and Words of Focus for the Season of Lent

The Lenten journey is a time to rediscover deeper connections with God. The journey requires courage, but also offers strength to face the world's challenges with truthful speech, righteousness, and even joy: having nothing and yet possessing everything.

Prelude *Prélude lent* A. Schmitt

***Call to Worship**

P: We come, aware of our sin, of all the ways we miss the mark.

L: God welcomes you with compassion.

P: We come, longing for restoration, to be made new.

L: God surrounds you with grace and forgiveness, reconciling you to God and one another.

P: We come, thirsting for reconciliation, to draw close to God and one another.

L: God embraces you with love, reuniting us with God and one another.

ALL: Sustain in us, O God, a willing spirit to return to the joy of our salvation as we journey together through the season of Lent.

***Opening Prayer**

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call

forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Opening Hymn* *Sweet Hour of Prayer* UMH 496

PRAYERS AND GIFTS OF GOD

Pastoral Prayer

Responsive Prayer of Confession (inspired by Psalm 51)

L: On this first day of Lent we pause, look within, and examine our consciousness.

P: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

L: Where we have neglected prayer, been apathetic in worship, found reasons to avoid generosity, or lacked compassion:

P: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

L: Where we have colluded in the oppression of those who become invisible in their suffering, and ignored on the streets:

P: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

L: Where anxiety has eroded the gift of Your peace, and where we have cared too much about what others think:

P: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

Words of Assurance

As Lent begins, know that God understands how we struggle to stay open and compassionate. The invitation is not to focus on our inadequacies but on God's gift of grace and love which transforms our hearts and minds. That gift is given to us again, here and now. Be encouraged.

Invitation for the Offering

The Offering

Offertory

**Doxology*

UMH 95

**Offering Prayer*

Anthem *An Hour of Hallowed Peace* Steve Danyew

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Introduction to the Word

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

Unison Response to the Word

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

Reflection "Sustain in Me" Rev. Hoyte Wilhelm

Hymn of Preparation

Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes TFWS 2138

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES

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**