

# St. Paul United Methodist Church

## A Service of Worship for Ash Wednesday

February 22, 2012

7:00 p.m.

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(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 is a powerful 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. -- UM Book of Worship.)

\* **PRELUDE**

Instrumental

\* **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

People: **God's mercy endures for ever.**

\* **OPENING PRAYER**

O God,  
maker of every thing and judge of all you have made,  
from the dust of the earth you have formed us  
and from the dust of death you would raise us up.

By the redemptive power of the cross  
create in us clean heart  
and put within us a new spirit,  
that we may repent of our sins  
and lead lives worthy of your calling;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

\* **HYMN: "Take Time to Be Holy"**

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**SCRIPTURE LESSON: Joel 2:1-2; 12-17**

Pew Bible p. 807

**MEDITATION**

Rev. Dan Garrett

**INVITATION TO THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE**

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,

(continued)

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.

## IMPOSITION OF THE ASHES

(The pastor invites the people to come forward, the leaders dip a thumb in the ashes and make the sign of a cross  
on the forehead of each person...)

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return

(Persons may kneel at the chancel for silent prayer before returning to their seats.)

## CONFESSION

Psalm 51

785

## PARDON

The Lord God is merciful and gracious,  
endlessly patient, loving, and true,  
showing mercy to thousands,  
forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and granting pardon. Amen.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

\* HYMN: "Just As I Am, Without One Plea"

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\* BLESSING

\* GOING FORTH

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\*Indicates those who are able, please stand.