

A SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR ASH WEDNESDAY
March 5, 2025

PRELUDE My Jesus, I Love Thee Arr. by Mary Roe
GREETING

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

God welcomes you with compassion.

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

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

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

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

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.

HYMN #294 Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

This is the word of the Lord for the people of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

HOMILY

**INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN
DISCIPLINE
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 ASHES

CONFESSION AND PARDON

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

(Silent prayer)

*Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.
Where we have neglected prayer,
been apathetic in worship,
found reasons to avoid generosity,
or lacked compassion:*

(Silent prayer)

*Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.
Where we have colluded
in the oppression of those
who become invisible in their suffering,
and ignored on the streets:*

(Silent prayer)

*Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.
Where anxiety has eroded
the gift of Your peace, and where
we have cared too much
about what others think:*

(Silent prayer)

***Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.
Amen.***

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*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.*

***In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to
God. Amen.***

PASTORAL PRAYER & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE THE LORD'S PRAYER #895

HYMN #295 In the Cross of Christ I Glory

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

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Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. *Lent* comes from the Anglo-Saxon word: *lencten*, which means "spring." The season is a preparation for celebrating Easter. Historically, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by converts and then became a time for penance by all Christians. The First Sunday describes Jesus's temptation by Satan; and the Sixth Sunday (Palm Sunday), Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his subsequent passion and death. Because Sundays are always little Easters, the penitential spirit of Lent should be tempered with joyful expectation of the Resurrection.

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.



LAKE TOXAWAY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH