



Remember  
all are of  
the dust,  
and all  
turn to  
dust again

Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church  
Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2023

**A SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR  
ASH WEDNESDAY  
February 14, 2024**

**PRELUDE**

*Wondrous Love    Don Hustad*

**GREETING**

*Even now, return to me, says God. Let the sirens in the streets rage; let the trumpet from the church house blow. Let those consumed with darkness, gloomy from bad fortunes know that:*

***Even now, God says, return to me.***

*One: Let the abused and abusing hear, the defiant and disobedient revere. Let the sinner and the scornful draw near. Return from your ignorance, return from your injustice. Return from your apathy, return from your agony.*

***Even now, God says, return to me.***

*One: Return from your selfishness, return from your greed. Return from your neglect, return out of your need.*

***Even now, God says, return to me.***

*One: Return to me, with a clean heart. Return to me with fasting, weeping and mourning. **Return to me, God says, for I am gracious and merciful; I am slow to anger and full of steadfast love. Return to me, God says, for I am your God.***

**OPENING PRAYER**

***We give thanks, Eternal One,  
that we do not walk through life's deserts alone.  
You are ever with us,  
especially in our loneliest valleys.  
You bless us with friends who share this path,  
those who wear with us a cross of ashes  
to remind us that we are only human.  
Quiet the rushing thoughts of our minds.  
In this season, may we do less,  
so that you may do more.  
Receive our songs, our confessions, and our devotion,  
until we rise anew with Jesus, alive forevermore.  
Amen.***

**HYMN #269**

*Lord, Who Throughout these Forty Days*

## **SCRIPTPURE LESSONS**

### **Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

- 2:1 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near-
- 2:2 a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.
- 2:12 Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
- 2:13 rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.
- 2:14 Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God?
- 2:15 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly;
- 2:16 gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.
- 2:17 Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

### **Psalms 51:1-17 (Psalter Lesson)**

- 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
- 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
- 51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
- 51:4 Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.
- 51:5 Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- 51:6 You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 51:8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
- 51:9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
- 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.
- 51:11 Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

- 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.
- 51:14 Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.
- 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.
- 51:16 For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.
- 51:17 The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

**2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 (Epistle Reading)**

- 5:20b We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
- 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- 6:1 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.
- 6:2 For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!
- 6:3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry,
- 6:4 but as servants of God, we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,
- 6:5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger;
- 6:6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love,
- 6:7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;
- 6:8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;
- 6:9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see--we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed;
- 6:10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

**Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (Please stand for the Gospel)**

- 6:1 "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.
- 6:2 "So, whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.
- 6:3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,
- 6:4 so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
- 6:5 "And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.
- 6:6 But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
- 6:16 "And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.
- 6:17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,
- 6:18 so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
- 6:19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal;
- 6:20 but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.
- 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

*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**

*God of Grace, we give thanks  
that it is acceptable to be human.  
We rejoice that we do not have to have every answer.  
We praise you that you alone are God.  
May this season of Lent  
be a time to lament the sin of our world  
the suffering of humanity,  
and the travail of creation.  
Reassure us that you have created us "very good,"  
and that you forgive us when we behave badly.  
May our prayers be honest,  
trusting you to forgive, heal, and guide us. Amen.  
(Prayers of confession in silence)*

## **PASTORAL PRAYER & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER #895**

### **HYMN #292**

*What Wondrous Love is This*

## **DISSMISSAL WITH BLESSING**

### **POSTLUDE**

*Wonderous Love arr: Michael Burkhardt*

*Hymns are located on the next few pages and used with permission via One License #737113-A*

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LTUMC Staff:

Pastor: Marcus Dodson, 828-553-0282  
[marcus61dodson@gmail.com](mailto:marcus61dodson@gmail.com)

Organist: Charlie Steele

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314  
[administrator@laketoxawayumc.org](mailto:administrator@laketoxawayumc.org)

## ***The Season of Lent***

***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 sins before God within the community of faith. The form and content of the service focuses on the dual themes of sin and death in the light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ.***

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# Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days 269

1. Lord, who through-out these for-ty days for  
 2. As thou with Sa-tan didst con-tend, and  
 3. As thou didst hun-ger bear, and thirst, so  
 4. And through these days of pen-i-tence, and  
 5. A-bide with us, that so, this life of

us didst fast and pray, teach us with thee to  
 didst the vic-tory win, O give us strength in  
 teach us, gra-cious Lord, to die to self, and  
 through thy pas-sion-tide, yea, ev-er-more in  
 suf-fering o-ver past, an Eas-ter of un-

mourn our sins and close by thee to stay.  
 thee to fight, in thee to con-quer sin.  
 chief-ly live by thy most ho-ly word.  
 life and death, Je-sus, with us a-bide.  
 end-ing joy we may at-tain at last.

WORDS: Claudia F. Hernaman, 1873 (Mt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13)  
 MUSIC: USA folk melody; arr. by Annabel Morris Buchanan, 1938;  
 harm. by Charles H. Webb, 1988

LAND OF REST  
 CM

Harm. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House

## 292 What Wondrous Love Is This

1. What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,  
 2. What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,  
 3. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,  
 4. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,

what won - drous love is this, O my soul! What  
 what won - drous love is this, O my soul! What  
 to God and to the Lamb, I will sing; to  
 and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and

won-drous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to  
 won-drous love is this, that caused the Lord of life to  
 God and to the Lamb who is the great I AM, while  
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joy - ful be, and

bear the dread-ful curse for my soul, for my soul, to  
 lay a - side his crown for my soul, for my soul, to  
 mil-lions join the theme I will sing, I will sing; while  
 through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and

bear the dread - ful curse for my soul.  
 lay a - side his crown for my soul.  
 mil - lions join the theme I will sing.  
 through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

WORDS: USA folk hymn  
 MUSIC: USA folk hymn; harm. by Paul I. Christianson 1955

WONDROUS LOVE