



# HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## ASH WEDNESDAY

THE FIRST DAY OF LENT

FEBRUARY 14, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.

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Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.

That we are dust is a reminder that our lives are fragile, and that the lives and hearts of those around us are as well. We then must tread lightly and walk joyously, spreading love for hate, peace for rancor, and healing for a world that is all too wounded. That we are dust is a reminder that in our material existence there is a limitedness, a boundedness that leaves the reality of who we are all too often far from the people that we wish to be. We are left needing the help of our friends, family, and indeed our God to press forward. This simple yet profound common reality of our existence is the call to freedom and to patience, peace, and a humility within ourselves, which can reconcile who we are in reality with whom God has created us to be.

That unto dust we will return, though, is the challenge. Now is the time to cast off the darkness of our own hearts. Now is the time to rid ourselves of the chains, addictions, and habits which hold us bound. Now is the time to repair those wounded friendships, and to remember once again the joy that we had in them. The time is now because we are returning to dust, and there is no other time. Life is far too short, our time to love far too brief, our joy always far too limited. Now is the time; there is no other moment. The spring, which can never be held back, is coming. Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.

—Adapted from the writings of the Rev. Michael Rogers, S.J.



In  
remembrance  
of me...

# LENTEN MIDDAY COMMUNION

**Tuesdays at Noon**  
Lunch to follow in the  
Fellowship Hall (\$10)



Highlands United Methodist Church  
1045 20th Street South  
Birmingham, AL 35205

[www.highlandsumc.net/lent](http://www.highlandsumc.net/lent)



**February 20**

Reverend Amy DeWitt  
Trinity UMC - Homewood



**February 27**

Reverend Erica Cooper  
Baptist Church of the Covenant



**March 5**

Reverend Mary Henley  
Assistant District Superintendent



**March 12**

Reverend Dr. Tim Kelley  
Southside Baptist Church



**March 19**

Stephen Ingram  
Grace United Methodist Church



**March 26**

Reverend Charles Lee  
Retired United Methodist Clergy



# ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREACHING – THE REVEREND ALICE COOK

LITURGISTS – THE REVEREND MIKAH HUDSON, LESLIE WILLIAMS

CHOIRMASTER AND ORGANIST – RICHARD PHILLIPS

VERGER – BRIAN BELLENGER

\*Congregation please stand. Words in bold are spoken or sung by the congregation.

*Serving for Altar Guild:* Leslie Davis, Lynn L'Eplattenier

*Serving as Ushers:* Jim Shannon, Jimmy Shannon

*Serving as Crucifier:* Dylan Higgs

\*SILENT PROCESSION

\*GREETING

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.***

*Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins. **God's mercy endures forever.***

\*COLLECT FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

*O God, maker of everything and judge of all that 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 hearts 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

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

ST. FLAVIAN



1. Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us didst fast and pray, teach

3. As thou didst hun - ger bear, and thirst, so teach us, gra - cious Lord, to

4. And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through thy pas - sion - tide, yea,

5. A - bide with us, that so, this life of suf - fering o - ver - past, an



us with thee to mourn our sins and close by thee to stay.

die to self, and chief - ly live by thy most ho - ly word.

ev - er - more in life and death, Je - sus, with us a - bide.

Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at - tain at last.

FIRST LESSON

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

*May these words reveal Christ to us. **Thanks be to God.***

PSALTER

Psalm 103:8-14  
The Gentlemen of The Choir  
Benedic, anema mea

Plainsong: Tone VIII.2

<sup>8</sup>The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness.  
<sup>9</sup>He will not always accuse us, nor will he keep his anger forever.  
<sup>10</sup>He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.  
<sup>11</sup>For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.  
<sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us.  
<sup>13</sup>As a father cares for his children, so does the Lord care for those who fear him.  
<sup>14</sup>For he himself knows whereof we are made; he remembers that we are but dust.  
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,  
As it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.

EPISTLE LESSON

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10  
May these words reveal Christ to us. **Thanks be to God.**

\*GOSPEL LESSON

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew. **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

The Lesson

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

THE HOMILY

The Reverend Alice Cook

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Remember Not, Lord, Our Offences  
The Choir

Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers,  
Neither take thou vengeance of our sins, but spare us, good Lord,  
Spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.

Henry Purcell (1685 – 1695)

Text, Wisdom of Solomon 15:1-3

INVITATION TO OBSERVE A HOLY LENT

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, 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.

SILENT CONFESSION

## THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES

*The Lord be with you. And also with you.*

*Let us pray: 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

MUSIC DURING IMPOSITION OF ASHES

**Psalm 51**  
The Choir

Plainsong: Tone IV

*Miserere mei, Deus*

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.

<sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup>Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

<sup>5</sup>And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgment.

<sup>6</sup>Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother's womb.

<sup>7</sup>For behold, you look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

<sup>8</sup>Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.

<sup>9</sup>Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice.

<sup>10</sup>Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

<sup>11</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

<sup>12</sup>Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me.

<sup>13</sup>Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>I shall teach your ways to the wicked, and sinners shall return to you.

<sup>15</sup>Deliver me from death, O God, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

<sup>16</sup>Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

<sup>17</sup>Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.

<sup>18</sup>The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

<sup>19</sup>Be favorable and gracious to Zion, and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

<sup>20</sup>Then you will be pleased with the appointed sacrifices, with burnt-offerings and oblations;

*then shall they offer young bullocks upon your altar.*

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.*

*As it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.*

## LITANY OF PENITENCE

*Most holy and merciful Father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven. **Have mercy on us, Lord.***

*We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit. **Have mercy on us, Lord.***

*We confess to you, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives, **we confess to you, Lord.***

*(continued on next page)*

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you, Lord.  
 Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves, we confess to you, Lord.  
 Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work, we confess to you, Lord.  
 Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us, we confess to you, Lord.  
 Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done: for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, accept our repentance, Lord.  
 For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, accept our repentance, Lord.  
 For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, accept our repentance, Lord.  
 Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us; favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.  
 Accomplish in us the work of your salvation, that we may show forth your glory in the world.  
 By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord, bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

WORDS OF PARDON

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

KYRIE

McNeil Robinson (b. 1943)

The musical score for the Kyrie consists of three systems. Each system has two parts: 'Cantor' and 'ALL'. The music is written on a single treble clef staff with a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. \_\_\_\_\_' for the Cantor part and 'Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. \_\_\_\_\_' for the ALL part. The first system ends with a double bar line. The second system ends with a double bar line. The third system ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

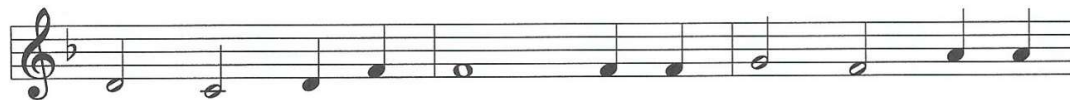
THE LORD'S PRAYER 895

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.

\*BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH



1. \*Sun-day's palms are Wednes-day's ash - es as an -  
 2. We have failed to love our neigh - bors, their of -  
 3. We are hast - y to judge oth - ers, blind to



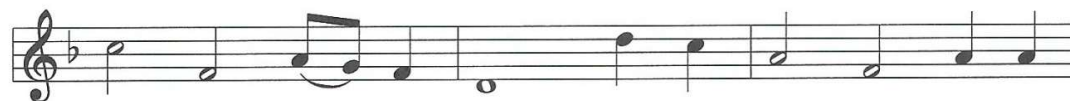
oth - er Lent be - gins; thus we kneel be - fore our  
 fenc - es to for - give, have not lis - tened to their  
 proof of hu - man need; and our lack of un - der -



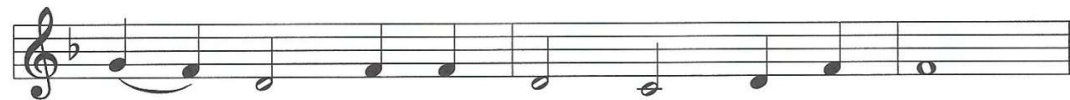
Mak - er in con - tri - tion for our  
 trou - bles, nor have cared just how they  
 stand - ing dem - on - strates our in - ner



sins. We have marred bap - tis - mal pledg - es, in re -  
 live, we are jeal - ous, proud, im - pa - tient, lov - ing  
 greed; we have wast - ed earth's re - sourc - es; want and



bel - lion gone a - stray; now, re - turn - ing, seek for -  
 o - ver - much our things; may the yield - ing of our  
 suf - fering we've ig - nored; come and cleanse us, then re -



give - ness; grant us par - don, God, this day!  
 fail - ings be our Len - ten of - fer - ings.  
 store us; make new hearts with - in us, Lord!

## \*SILENT PROCESSION

The service ends in silence. Please remain in silence until you exit the Sanctuary.

Highlands United Methodist Church is blessed to have one of the most beautiful pipe organs in the Southeast. Our Möller pipe organ is currently being re-leathered and repaired by the R. A. Colby Organ Company and will be out of commission for several months. I want to thank our congregation for raising over \$300,000 to refurbish our beloved instrument. Until the restoration is completed, we will be using an electronic organ as a substitute during our worship services.

Rick Phillips,  
 Choirmaster and Organist



# WELCOME TO HIGHLANDS!

## ALL ARE WELCOME



*A Reconciling Congregation with the Reconciling Ministries Network – [rmnetwork.org](http://rmnetwork.org)*

*Highlands United Methodist Church is a community of disciples of Christ; a beacon of hope, inviting all to become new persons in Christ to be sent into the world to share the Gospel and to serve our neighbors; and a sanctuary for those in need of God's love and grace.*

*Highlands United Methodist Church affirms that nothing can separate anyone from the love of God. We invite all to worship, wonder, and discover God's grace as we aspire to create a safe space for all to participate fully in the life of this community of faith. We are called to shine as a beacon of hope, grace, belonging, and respect for all people. Regardless of age, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, family, financial status, nationality, physical or mental ability, past or future, there is room for you at Highlands.*

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### INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

The message of the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, Paul, and the early church was always a message of welcome and inclusion for all. The image of God's kingdom is of something small and insignificant growing into something larger and of great significance. The oppressed, the alien, and the outcast were all welcomed, included, and cared for. In this sense, our faith is built upon the idea of gracious hospitality. Followers of Jesus are not about walls of exclusion but bridges of grace and acceptance. Ours is a faith of invitation, for all to come to know Jesus as the living Christ who overcomes all brokenness, sin, and even death, offering a way to make all things new. This invitation extends to you. If you desire to explore what this means for you, please speak to a member of the clergy after the service or sometime this week. We welcome the opportunity to visit with you.

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### OFFERING

#### *Cash or Check Giving:*

- Giving envelopes are available in the pew racks.  
Checks may be made payable to HUMC.

#### *Electronic Giving:*

- Text GIVE to 205-900-3040. A link will be provided for a simple, quick way to give with one click.
- Visit [www.highlandsumc.net/giving](http://www.highlandsumc.net/giving) to give using a debit, credit card, or bank account.

#### *Sustainable Giving:*

- To set up automatic monthly bank drafts, contact financial manager Tyra Johnson-Pirtle at [finance@highlandsumc.net](mailto:finance@highlandsumc.net).



SCAN THE CODE WITH YOUR MOBILE  
DEVICE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT'S  
HAPPENING AT HIGHLANDS!

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