



HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ASH WEDNESDAY

THE FIRST DAY OF LENT

FEBRUARY 22, 2023 – NOON SERVICE



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.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREACHING – THE REVEREND GARRETT HARPER

LITURGIST – THE REVEREND MIKAH HUDSON

CHOIRMASTER & ORGANIST – RICHARD PHILLIPS

VERGER – BRIAN BELLENGER

CANTORS – DAVID BUSBY, BRETT HUFFMAN

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

*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 340

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy

Verses 1-3

RESTORATION

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 Choir

Plainsong: Tone VIII.2

⁸*The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness.*

⁹*He will not always accuse us, nor will he keep his anger forever.*

¹⁰*He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.*

¹¹*For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.*

¹²*As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us.*

¹³*As a father cares for his children, so does the Lord care for those who fear him.*

¹⁴*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 25:31-46

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

INVITATION TO OBSERVE A HOLY LENT

Beloved 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

Psalm 51

Setting: Plainsong Tone IVe

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.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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.

*HYMN 592

When the Church of Jesus

KINGS WESTON

*BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

*SILENT PROCESSION

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



WELCOME TO HIGHLANDS!

ALL ARE WELCOME



A Reconciling Congregation with the Reconciling Ministries Network – 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.

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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

- If you have been exposed to COVID-19 or exhibit symptoms of illness, please join us for online worship. *Worship services are livestreamed on Facebook, Youtube, and Vimeo. Visit www.highlandsumc.net for more information.*
- Hand sanitizer is available throughout the Sanctuary and church building. Congregants are especially encouraged to sanitize hands prior to receiving Holy Communion.

If you have questions or concerns regarding in-person worship safety protocols, please contact the church office at 205-933-8751.

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 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.

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