

First United Methodist Church of Saginaw
Contemplative Ash Wednesday Service
February 14, 2024 7:00pm

----- The beginning of the service will be denoted by the ringing of a bell. -----

Song: "Sunday's Palms are Wednesday's Ashes" – *The Faith We Sing* #2138
Tune: Beach Spring

Sunday's Palms are Wednesday's ashes as another Lent begins
Thus we kneel before our Maker in contrition for our sins.
We have marred baptismal pledges, in rebellion gone astray;
Now returning, seek forgiveness; grant us pardon, God, this day.

We have failed to love our neighbors, their offenses to forgive
Have not listened to their troubles, nor have cared just how they live
We are jealous, proud, impatient, loving over-much our things;
May the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.

We are hasty to judge others, blind to proof of human need;
And our lack of understanding demonstrates our inner greed.
We have wasted earth's resources; want and suffering we've ignored;
Come and cleanse us, then restore us; make new hearts within us, Lord

An Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline:

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 full 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.

Thus, in the name of Christ and the Church, I invite you 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 come before our Creator and Redeemer with humble spirits
in confession of our sin:

Unison Prayer of Confession (spoken together)

Gracious God, we confess to you this day our sinful nature – our greed, our envy,
our selfishness, our lust, our pride, our laziness, and our hate. Forgive us our
tendency to follow the path of least resistance; our concern with what others say
and think of us; and our failure to rest our identity in you. Forgive our reluctance
to surrender ourselves to your calling, and our sin to your healing. Work in us, O
God. Shape our hearts into bastions of love, that our community may reflect your
will on earth, as in heaven, and so become a haven of peace and grace for all people,
in the name of Christ our Savior. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Hear the Good News: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. That proves
God's love for us. In the name of Christ, we have all been forgiven. Thanks be to
God. Amen.

Song: "Our Darkness"

from Songs & Prayers from Taizé (#14) ©1991 Ateliers et Presses de Taizé

The musical score for "Our Darkness" is presented in two systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: "Our dark - ness is nev - er dark - ness in your sight: the deep - est night is clear as the day light. Our". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "fine".

Scripture: Psalm 51:1-12

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; According to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my sin, and cleanse me of my guilt. ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against 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. ⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when I was conceived. ⁶ You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let my crushed bones rejoice. ⁹ Hide your face from my guilt, and blot out all my sin. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence, nor strip me of your Holy Spirit. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Silence (2 minutes)

Act of Worship: Washing Away our Sin

You are invited to continue in a time of silent prayer and meditation. During this time, use the special water-soluble scrap of paper attached below to write down something about yourself that you'd like to overcome, such as a sin or area of brokenness that keeps you from reaching your full potential. This is confidential. No one will see it but you and God. After the time of silence, you'll be invited to come forward during the singing to dissolve your scrap of paper in water as a symbolic gesture of release, forgiveness, and/or healing.

Song FWS #2133 - "Give Me a Clean Heart"

Give me a clean heart so I may serve
thee. Lord, fix my heart so that I may be used by
thee. For I'm not worth - y of all those bless -
ings. Give me a clean heart, _____ and I'll fol-low thee. _____

Scripture: 1 John 4:7-12

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Choral Anthem: "The Love He Gave"

Jay Althouse

Meditation: "There's Love In All This"

Rev. Amy Terhune

The Imposition of Ashes

Come forward as you feel led to receive the ashes placed on your forehead or your hand. As you come, the pastor will say, "The old has died, and the new has come." You may respond with silence or "amen".

Song: "Humble Thyself"

from The Faith We Sing (#2131) ©1978 Maranatha! Music, w/m by Bob Hudson

Part 2 (descant)

Hum-ble thy-self in the sight of the

Part 1 (melody)

Hum-ble thy-self in the sight of the Lord.

Detailed description: This block contains the first two systems of musical notation. The first system features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It includes a descant line (Part 2) and a melody line (Part 1). The lyrics 'Hum-ble thy-self in the sight of the' are written below the descant line. The second system continues the melody line with the lyrics 'Hum-ble thy-self in the sight of the Lord.'

Lord. Hum-ble thy-self in the sight of the Lord,

Hum-ble thy-self in the sight of the Lord, and

Detailed description: This block contains the third and fourth systems of musical notation. The third system shows a change in time signature from 3/4 to 4/4. The lyrics 'Lord. Hum-ble thy-self in the sight of the Lord,' are written below the melody line. The fourth system continues with the lyrics 'Hum-ble thy-self in the sight of the Lord, and'.

and God shall lift you up,

God shall lift you up, high-er and high - er, and

Detailed description: This block contains the fifth and sixth systems of musical notation. The fifth system has the lyrics 'and God shall lift you up,'. The sixth system has the lyrics 'God shall lift you up, high-er and high - er, and'.

and God shall lift you up.

God shall lift you up.

Detailed description: This block contains the seventh and eighth systems of musical notation. The seventh system has the lyrics 'and God shall lift you up.'. The eighth system has the lyrics 'God shall lift you up.'.

Silence (10 minutes)

Song "Lord Jesus Christ"

from Worship and Song (#3137) ©1998 Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications; by Jacques Berthier

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "Lord Je - sus Christ, your light shines with - in us. Let not my doubts nor my dark-ness speak to me. Lord Je - sus Christ, your light shines with-in us. Let my heart al-ways wel - come your love." The score includes measure numbers 3, 6, and 9.

Unison Closing Prayer adapted from Ruth C. Duck in "Touch Holiness":

Creating God, still Center of the world you have made, we come to you in this season of turning and returning. We don't know how to seek you with our whole hearts, but we know you are our source and our life, and so we return again to you. We thank you that you love us despite our sin; that you receive even the broken heart, the troubled conscience, the conflicted spirit. And now, having sought you in worship, may we go forth to honor you in public, through Jesus Christ, our savior and our life. Amen.

----- The closing of the service will be denoted by the ringing of a bell. -----

All songs reproduced by permission. CCLI License #1003593
Join us for Taizé on the 1st Wednesday of Each Month at 7:00pm
Join us for Traditional Worship on Sunday mornings at 10:00am
Check out our Website: www.firstumcsaginaw.org

Saginaw First United Methodist Church
4790 Gratiot Road, Saginaw, MI 48638
(989) 799-0131
firstumcsaginaw@gmail.com