

**BETHESDA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE**  
**6 p.m. 22 February 2023**

**ENTRANCE**

Announcements *(To help us connect, please sign  
the attendance pad in your pew)*

\*Greeting\*\*:  
Let all the earth tremble,  
**For the day of the Lord is coming.**  
Let us call upon the Name of the Lord.  
**Our God is slow to anger  
and abounding in steadfast love.**  
**Blessed be the name of the Lord.** *(Joel 2)*

\*Opening Prayer: 353 "Ash Wednesday"

\*Opening Hymn: 379 "Blow Ye the Trumpet, Blow"

**PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**

Prayer for Illumination: 382 *(Verse 1 only)* "Have Thine Own  
Way, Lord"

First Lesson: Joel 2:1-2, 2-17

Psalter: 785 *(Response 1)* Psalm 51:1-17

Second Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

\*Hymn of Preparation: 496 "Sweet Hour of Prayer"

\*Gospel Lesson: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Sermon: *"Surprise!"*

Affirmation of Faith: 881 "The Apostles' Creed,  
Traditional Version"

(2)

Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline^:

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  
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.

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^: Remember that you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.

Repent, and believe the gospel.

(3)

Confession and Pardon^:

May the almighty and merciful God  
who desires not the death of a sinner  
but that we turn from wickedness and live,  
accept your repentance, forgive your sins,  
and restore you by the Holy Spirit to newness of life.

**Amen.**

\*The Peace: Let us offer one another  
signs of reconciliation and love.  
The peace of Christ be with you.  
**And also with you.**

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**THANKSGIVING**

Invitation: As forgiven and reconciled people,  
let us offer ourselves and our gifts to God.

Offering/Offertory

Prayer of Thanksgiving\*\*:

**O Lord our God,  
by the power of your Holy Spirit enable us to be  
truly sorry for our sins.  
Help us to repent of our ways and to seek only your face.  
Make our time of fasting a true renewal of our faith;  
Take our alms and transform them into acts of compassion.  
O God, hear our prayers and answer them  
as you know is best for us,  
for we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: 895

(4)

**SENDING FORTH**

\*Closing Hymn: 269 "Lord, Who Throughout  
These Forty Days"

\*Dismissal with Blessing^:  
Go forth in peace.  
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all. **Amen.**

\*Going Forth

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\*Indicates the people standing, if able and willing

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