

**ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP
CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

March 1, 2017

12:15 and 6:30 P.M.

Together in Christ, Reaching Beyond Our Doors.

PRELUDE

THE CALL OF LENT

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We are formed of the dust.

People: To dust we shall return.

Leader: This truth is a gift.

People: It reminds us that we are created, not the Creator.

Leader: It invites us to trust the One who made us.

People: It offers us perspective and corrects our bent toward idolatry.

Leader: We are formed of the dust.

People: To dust we shall return.

All: Thanks be to God who formed us in God's image.

HYMN

"The Summons"

No. 2130

A READING FROM THE PROPHET Joel 2: 12-18

(OT p. 847)

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray together:

People: God, this is a hard time. The focus of Lent is on the pain and suffering of Jesus and our own need for penitence. But we would rather skip this part and go straight to Easter. We would rather ignore the suffering—in you and in the world—and avoid the hard work of true self-examination. Forgive us for wanting this to be bright and sunny and easy, when we know that Jesus did not take the easy way, but chose the brave path of the Cross. Teach us the true meaning of penitence, of turning away from self-interest, so that we use this Lenten season to humbly seek a clean heart and a renewed spirit. We pray in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen.

HYMN

"Come and Find the Quiet Center"

No. 2128

A TIME OF SILENCE

During this time, we are invited to name in ourselves one self-serving habit we can change or lessen during this Lent.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18

(NT p. 5)

HOMILY

"Empty Hands are Best for Holding" Pastor Chris Lane

THE ASHES

Leader 1: Ash Wednesday invites us to come back to earth. To wonder at the gift of life, my life, our life with the earth, the shared body of our existence.

Leader 2: These ashes were once trees and shrubs, and places where life was lived to its fullest.
Once they were full of life. Now they are black and grey. Dry. Lifeless.

ALL: But mixed with the waters of our baptism make good fertilizer: it will help the seeds of the gospel take deeper root in us and bring forth the fruits, the harvest of justice, peace, and generosity.

Leader 1: These are ashes worth wearing.

Leader 2: May we accept this gift, be blessed, and be assured we will be
different at the end of this season. For from the burnt ashes will spring the green shoot of life
and the purple flower of attentiveness to God.

MINISTRY OF MUSIC (12:15) Candice Wallace, soloist

MINISTRY OF MUSIC (6:30) "Will You Bear the Cross" Chancel Choir

THE BREAD AND THE CUP

Where is the glory now?

All that light from last week
all that wonder
and mystery
turns to dust and ashes
and a single set of footprints in the sand

Where is the glory now?
All that revelation on the mountain top
and sharp light
turns to bread and wine
and a table waiting for those willing to pick up the cross

Let us break bread together
and begin this new journey
finding in the crumbs and the dust
the deeper, deeper, broken glory
of love's way.

SHARING IN HOLY COMMUNION AND THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Words of Institution

Prayer for the Holy Spirit (in unison)

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. In our journey of faith, may we know your real presence now and in the daily practice of our faith. Amen.

Following the blessing of the bread and cup, all are invited to come forward to receive. You may then choose to be marked with ashes. You may be marked on the forehead or the hand. You may then return to your seat to reflect on the gift that is our mortality.

*HYMN "Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness" No. 2120

*BLESSING

*CHORAL BENEDICTION (6:30) "May The Heavenly Father"

*POSTLUDE