

ASH WEDNESDAY

17 February, Anno Domini 2021

Eight o'clock in the morning | The Sanctuary

✠ denotes the People stand, in body or in spirit, as able.

The People's responses are printed in bold.



SILENT PRAYER of PREPARATION for WORSHIP

Almighty and Everlasting God, You hate nothing You have made, and You forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of You, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen. —Book of Common Prayer

✠ CALL to WORSHIP (responsively)

The Rev^d Dr. Mark Conforti, Senior Pastor

Return to the Lord your God,

for God is gracious.

Confess to the Lord your God,

for God is merciful.

Repent to the Lord your God,

for God is slow to anger.

Praise the Lord your God,

for God abounds in steadfast love. (from Joel 2.13)

The first line of this hymn recalls the custom of burning the palm branches from the previous year's Palm Sunday to form the ashes for Ash Wednesday. For more information about the history of this hymn, please visit: [Discipleship Ministries | History of Hymns: 'Sunday's Palms Are...' \(umcdiscipleship.org\)](http://umcdiscipleship.org).

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!

2. 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 overmuch our things;
may the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.

3. 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!

PROCESSION of LIGHT

Master Nicholas Foote, *Acolyte*

✦ PRAYER for ILLUMINATION (*in unison*)

The Rev^d Stacey Lundy, *Associate Pastor*

SPIRIT of all Wisdom,
we desire to be reconciled to Your Will in our world.
Remove any obstacles before us
that would keep us from understanding Your Word.
On this Lenten journey, guide our footsteps
that we might follow the path of Christ to the cross.
Amen.

✠ DECALOGUE (*responsively*)

from [Exodus 20.1-17](#); [Deuteronomy 5.6-21](#)

God spoke from the mountain and said: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.”

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

“You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

“You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.”

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

“Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.”

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, so that your days may be long and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.”

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

“You shall not murder.”

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

“You shall not commit adultery.”

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

“You shall not steal.”

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

**Lord, have mercy upon us,
and write all these, Your laws, in our hearts, we beseech You.**

GRADUAL SONG

SHOW ME

*You could plant me like a tree beside a river,
You could tangle me in soil and let my roots run wild;
And I would blossom like a flower in the desert,
but for now just let me cry.*

*You could raise me like a banner in a battle,
put victory like fire behind my shining eyes;
And I would drift like falling snow over the embers,
but for now just let me lie.*

*Bind up these broken bones,
mercy bend and breathe me back to life,
but not before You show me how to die.*

*Set me like a star before the morning,
like a song that steals the darkness from a world asleep;
And I'll illuminate the path You've laid before me,
but for now just let me be.*

*So, let me go like a leaf upon the water,
let me brave the wild currents flowing to the sea;
And I will disappear into a deeper beauty,
but for now just stay with me.
God, for now just stay with me.*

GOSPEL LESSON

[Matthew 6.1-6,16-21](#)

...This is the Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

HOMILY

THANKSGIVING OVER *the* ASHES

Almighty God, You have created us out of the dust of the earth.
Grant that these ashes may be for us a symbol of our mortality and a sign of our penitence,
so that we may remember that it is by Your grace alone
that we receive the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

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
there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism.

It is 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, self-denial, and alms-giving;
and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

And to make a right beginning of repentance,
and as a mark of our mortal nature,
let us now bow before the LORD, our Creator and Redeemer,
calling to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God,
that we may pray for grace, to faithfully keep this Lent.

(A brief moment of silent prayer and reflection follows.)

CALL to LAMENT and REPENTANCE

[Hebrews 4.9-16](#)

⁹So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; ¹⁰for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from his. ¹¹Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs.

¹²Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

¹⁴Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

To the leader. A Psalm of David, when the Prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone into Bathsheba.

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

³For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁴Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless in your judgment.

⁵Behold, I was born in iniquity,
and I have been sinful since my mother conceived me.

⁶Behold, you desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;

⁸Make me hear with joy and gladness;
let the bones which you have broken rejoice.

⁹Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

¹¹Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

¹³Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

¹⁴Deliver me from death, O God, God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

¹⁵O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall show forth your praise.

¹⁶For you have no delight in sacrifice;
were I to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

¹⁷The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

(A brief moment of silence follows for private confession.)

ASSURANCE of GOD'S 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.

SONG of RESPONSE (in unison)

HIS MERCY IS MORE

This modern hymn will be serving as our "Lenten anthem" and will be used every service during Lent. This hymn takes us through the gospel story and reminds us over and over again of the grace of God. God's mercy was reflected in the cross of Calvary when He sent His only Son to die for us so that we may live a victorious and abundant life. We are reminded of the mercy Jesus showed us, and the heavy price He paid on the cross, for all of us to be saved from the punishment of our sins. The hymn writers found their lyrical inspiration from a [letter](#) penned by John Newton, writer of the beloved hymn, "Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound." In a letter dated March 18, 1767, Newton wrote: "Our sins are many, but His mercies are more: our sins are great, but His righteousness is greater: we are weak, but He is power!"

P*RAISE the Lord, His mercy is more!
Stronger than darkness, new every morn.
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more!*

1. What love could remember no wrongs we have done?
Omniscient, all-knowing, He counts not their sum.
Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore,
our sins, they are many; His mercy is more!

*Praise the Lord, His mercy is more!
Stronger than darkness, new every morn.
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more!*

2. What patience would wait as we constantly roam?
What Father, so tender, is calling us home?
He welcome the weakest, the vilest, the poor.
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more!

*Praise the Lord, His mercy is more!
Stronger than darkness, new every morn.
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more!*

3. What riches of kindness He lavished on us.
His blood was the payment; His life was the cost.
We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford.
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more!

*Praise the Lord, His mercy is more!
Stronger than darkness, new every morn.
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more!*

*Praise the Lord, His mercy is more!
Stronger than darkness, new every morn.
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more!*

*Praise the Lord, His mercy is more!
Stronger than darkness, new every morn.
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more!
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more!*

RECEPTION of GOD'S TITHES and OUR OFFERINGS

You may support the ministries of FUMC by making a donation via our secure [Online Giving](#) portal.

All things come from You, O God, and with praise and thanksgiving we return to You what is Yours. You created all that is, and with love formed us in Your image. When our love failed, Your love remained steadfast. You gave Your only Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior, that we might have abundant and eternal life. All that we are, and all that we have, is a trust from You. And so, in gratitude for all that You have done, we offer You ourselves, and all that we have, in union with Christ's offering for us. By Your Holy Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

– UBW 27

PRAYER of RESPONSE

Let us pray:

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.

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.*

✦ SENDING HYMN (in unison)

LAND OF REST

This text by Claudia Hernaman recalls Jesus' fasting in the wilderness for forty days and nights and the temptations posed by Satan. Each stanza mentions the struggles of Jesus and concludes with a prayer – for strength to conquer sin, to learn to live, to abide in Christy, and, after this life, to attain “an Easter of unending joy.”

O God our Deliverer, You led Your people of old through the wilderness and brought them to the Promised Land. Guide now the people of Your Church, that, following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.
 – UMH No. 268



1 Lord, who throughout these for - ty days for us did fast and pray,
 2 As you with Sa - tan did con-tend, and did the vic - tory win,
 3 As you did hun-ger and did thirst, so teach us, gra - cious Lord,
 4 And thro' these days of pen - i - tence, and thro' your Pas - sion-tide,
 5 A - bide with us, that through this life of doubts and hope and pain,



teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.
 O give us strength in you to fight, in you to con-quer sin.
 to die to self, and so to live by your most ho - ly Word.
 for - ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.
 an Eas-ter of un - end - ing joy we may at last at - tain!

✦ BENEDICTION and COMMISSION

...Thanks be to God! *Amen.*

✦ DEPARTURE into THE MISSION FIELD

O Lord our God, grant us grace to desire You with our whole heart:
that desiring You, we may seek You;
and that seeking You, we may find You;
and that finding You, we may love You;
and that loving You, we may hate those sins from which You have delivered us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

–Book of Common Prayer



Our Lenten banner depicts the cross of Christ in white. It stands out against the darkness of purple, ash gray, and other somber colors, representing pain, suffering, mourning, and penance. The two black crosses of the thieves crucified with Christ are in the background. In contrast, the lighter colors around the cross of Christ represent hope that comes from the blood of Christ, shed for our redemption and the forgiveness of sin.

A special “thank you” to all those serving in worship today, including:

Ms. Jen Fogt, Director of Youth Ministry, for her service as Audio/Visual Technician & Producer,
and The Reverend Stacey Lundy, Associate Pastor, for compiling and editing the service video.



Week of February 14-20

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| 7 | EXODUS 21-22 MATTHEW 5 PSALM 5 | EXODUS 23-24 MATTHEW 6-7 | EXODUS 25-26 MATTHEW 8-9 | EXODUS 27-28 MATTHEW 10-11 | EXODUS 29-30 PSALM 133 MATTHEW 12 |
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Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days; (UMH 269) Words: Claudia F. Hernaman, 1873, alt.; (Matthew 4.1-11; Mark 1.12-13; Luke 4.1-13); Music: USA folk melody; arr. Annabel Morris Buchanan, 1938; harm. Charles H. Webb, 1988, © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House.



FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
Salisbury, North Carolina

217 SOUTH CHURCH STREET, SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA 28144-4927
704.636.3121 ✦ www.fumcsalisbury.org

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“To Make and Nurture Christian Disciples through the Presence and Power of God.”