



## Come to Believe † Come to Belong

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 5, 2025

### INTRODUCTION

*Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent with ash on our foreheads. This cross echoes our baptismal anointing, when we were buried with Christ. The ash is a chilling reminder of our mortality, but because our death is now in Christ, our endings are beginnings. The Lenten disciplines (acts of kindness, prayer, and fasting) are tools of discipleship that can lead us to renewal as we bury all that is holding us back from being truly alive.*

### GATHERING

*The assembly gathers in silence.*

### READING

Psalm 51

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

<sup>2</sup> **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup> **Against you, 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.**

<sup>5</sup> Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

<sup>6</sup> **You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

<sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup> **Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.**

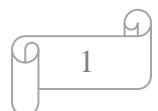
<sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

<sup>10</sup> **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.**

<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup> **Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

<sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.



## OPENING HYMN "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"



1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and  
2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on  
3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van - guard  
4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim with



trem - bling stand; pon - der noth - ing earth - ly mind - ed,  
earth he stood, Lord of lords in hu - man ves - ture,  
on the way; as the Light of light, de - scend - ing  
sleep - less eye, veil their fac - es to the pres - ence,



for with bless - ing in his hand Christ our God to earth de -  
in the bod - y and the blood, he will give to all the  
from the realms of end - less day, comes, the pow'rs of hell to  
as with cease - less voice they cry: "Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -



scend - ing comes our hom - age to de - mand.  
faith - ful his own self for heav'n - ly food.  
van - quish, as the dark - ness clears a - way.  
lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.**

Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus said: "If any would come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.**

Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus — the pioneer and perfecter of our faith — who, for the sake of the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Lord, we believe; help us in our unbelief.**

**PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE:**

Let us draw near to God with an honest heart, confessing our sins to God the Father, and appealing to him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

*(silence is observed for reflection and self-examination.)*

Almighty God,

**We confess to you that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

We have received your many blessings with a lack of gratitude; and have failed to be good stewards of your Creation.

**Have mercy on us, Lord.**

We have followed our own selfish will and ways, and we have failed to be your trusting and obedient servants.

**Have mercy on us, Lord.**

We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven, and have failed to be your witnesses in the world.

**Have mercy on us, Lord.**

We confess to you, Lord, all our unfaithfulness — our fear, our anger, our pride, and our trust in our own righteousness.

**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

We confess to you, Lord, our lack of concern for the needs of others, and our sense of entitlement to all we possess.

**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

We confess to you, Lord, our negligence in worship, and our rejection of your Word in our lives.

**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Restore us, O God and let your anger depart from us.

**Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

*Amen.*

### **THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

As children of a fallen humanity, each of us shares in the consequences of human sin. In the words that the Lord first spoke to Adam, he now reminds us all: “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Therefore, face-to-face, in the presence of God, we offer our confession in the spirit of our ancestor Job, who prayed:

**I had heard you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**

As a sign of repentance, I now ask those who wish to do so, to come forward to receive the mark of the cross in ashes upon their brow.

### **HYMN REFRAIN**     *(sung to the tune of “Alleluia”)*

v.1 **A-le-lu-ia...**

v.2 **Holy Father ...**

v.3 **Christ have mercy ...**

v.4 **Blessed Jesus ...**

v.5 **Lord have mercy ...**

v.6 **Loving Spirit ...**

v.7 **God have mercy...**

v.8 **A-le-lu-ia**

*(Repeat the cycle of verses during the imposition of ashes)*

### **THE PROMISE OF CHRIST:**

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,  
**that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Lord,  
**bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake, God forgives us all our sins. By his Holy Spirit, may he grant you true repentance, that you may live with him in righteousness and purity forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Amen.*

## FIRST READING

Isaiah 58:1-12

<sup>1</sup> “Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins. <sup>2</sup> Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to God. <sup>3</sup> ‘Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’ Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. <sup>4</sup> Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. <sup>5</sup> Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup> “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? <sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? <sup>8</sup> Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. <sup>9</sup> Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, <sup>10</sup> if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. <sup>11</sup> And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. <sup>12</sup> And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.

The word of God, the word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20—6:10

<sup>20</sup> We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup> For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

<sup>3</sup> We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup> but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup> beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup> by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup> truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup> in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup> as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see - we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup> as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything. The word of God; the word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

## GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 6th chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord!!**

<sup>1</sup>Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup> So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup> But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup> And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>16</sup> And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup> Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ!!**

## HOMILY

Pastor Gary Heltsley



**HYMN OF THE DAY**    “Change My Heart, O God” (2 times)

Change my heart, O God.                      Make it ev - er true.

Change my heart, O God.                      May I be like you.

You are the pot - ter,                      I am the clay;

mold me and make me,                      this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God.                      Make it ev - er true.

Change my heart, O God.                      May I be like you.

The musical score consists of six staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive. The lyrics are printed below the notes. The first two staves are the first line of the hymn, and the last two staves are the second line. The middle two staves contain the central verse of the hymn. There are triplets in the third and fourth staves.

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P) As we journey toward the renewing waters of Easter, let us pray for the world, the church, and all who seek new life in Christ.

Loving God, restore our broken lives and turn our hearts toward you, that we may live in honest repentance and in the promise of your grace. God of our salvation, *hear our prayer.*

Bring justice to the oppressed of the earth, surround the poor with renewed hope, grant sufficient food to the hungry, and teach us all to care lovingly for your creation. God of our salvation, *hear our prayer.*

Heal nations afflicted by sins of greed, pride, and violence, that your ways of peacemaking and unity may prevail throughout the world. God of our salvation, *hear our prayer.*



Send your compassion to those who are weighed down by sickness, grief, or guilt, that they might receive new life and the encouragement of your steadfast love. God of our salvation,  
*hear our prayer.*

Guide us through this time of Lent, that our works of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving may spring from your mercy and reveal the treasure of your presence. God of our salvation,  
*hear our prayer.*

We remember those who have died in your mercy. Strengthen us to face our own mortality with humility and courage, and to trust in your promise of life in the world to come. God of our salvation,  
*hear our prayer.*

P) Receive our prayers and grant us your mercy, O God, in the name of the crucified and risen one, Jesus Christ our Savior.  
*Amen.*

## THE PEACE

The peace of the LORD be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

## OFFERING

### OFFERTORY “*Create in Me a Clean Heart*”



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take  
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of  
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. God our provider,  
**you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, together we praise your name:

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY** (*Spoken*)

**Holy, holy, holy Lord**

**God of power and might.**

**Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE LORD'S TABLE**

Blessed are you, O God of the universe.

Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER** *(Spoken)*

**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 and ever. Amen**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Holy things for holy people.

**One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God.**

**THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION** *is open to all Christians. We believe and teach that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine, which are his body and blood. (The red liquid is wine; the white liquid is grape juice).*

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER**

P) Merciful God, accompany us on our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C) *Amen.*

## BLESSING

Jesus took the form of a servant and was obedient to death, even death on a cross. May you follow his example and share in the resurrection.

May Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

*Amen.*

## SENDING SONG      *“Jesus, Refuge of the Weary”*



1 Je - sus, ref - uge of the wea - ry, Blest re - deem - er, whom we love,  
2 Do we pass that cross un - heed - ing, Breath - ing no re - pen - tant vow,  
3 Je - sus, may our hearts be burn - ing With more fer - vent love for you;



Foun - tain in life's des - ert drea - ry, Sav - ior from the world a - bove:  
Though we see you wound - ed, bleed - ing, See your thorn - en - cir - cled brow?  
May our eyes be ev - er turn - ing To be - hold your cross a - new;



Of - ten have your eyes, of - fend - ed, Gazed up - on the sin - ner's fall;  
Yet your sin - less death has brought us Life e - ter - nal, peace, and rest;  
Till in glo - ry, part - ed nev - er From the bless - ed Sav - ior's side,



Yet up - on the cross ex - tend - ed, You have borne the pain of all.  
On - ly what your grace has taught us Calms the sin - ner's deep dis - tress.  
Grav - en in our hearts for - ev - er, Dwell the cross, the Cru - ci - fied.

## SENDING

Marked with the cross of Christ, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**



### *Ash Wednesday*

*On this solemn first day of Lent, we are reminded of our deep need for God’s mercy and forgiveness. We are no different than Israel, David, the Corinthians, or the disciples. We all fall short of God’s standards and need Jesus to reconcile us to the Father. Even our piety is tainted by sin as we practice prayer and giving and serving with ill motives. We, like David, cry, “Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew in me a right spirit. Cast me not away from your presence.”*

### **Lenten Services**

Lenten services begin next week. Each Wednesday from **March 12<sup>th</sup> through April 9<sup>th</sup>** we will begin with Soup Suppers in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 pm. Then at 7:00 pm, we will gather in the sanctuary for a time of peaceful worship. Please look for sign-up sheets next to the door in the Fellowship Hall to sign up to bring soup or bread.

*At the Crossroads* is the theme of the messages for our midweek Lenten services. Many of those involved in the story of the Passion of Christ came to a crossroads and had to decide which way to go. Some chose well, some did not, and the stories of each of these experiences at various crossroads help us to know what to do and what not to do when we encounter similar crossroads in our own lives.

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