

Happening @ Hanover

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

February 17, 2021
Ash Wednesday Service

Lent is a season of forty days not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. *Lent* comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, which means "spring." The season is a preparation for celebrating Easter. Historically, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by converts and then became a time for penance by all Christians. The First Sunday describes Jesus' temptation by Satan; and the Sixth Sunday (Passion/Palm Sunday), Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his subsequent passion and death. Because Sundays are always little Easters, the penitential spirit of Lent should be tempered with joyful expectation of Resurrection.

Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter; we confront our own mortality and confess our sin before God within the community of faith. The form and content of the service focus on the dual themes of sin and death in the light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ.

Greeting:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins. God's mercy endures forever.

Opening Prayer

Hymn: #269 *Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days* (sung to the tune of Amazing Grace)

1. Lord, who throughout these forty days for us didst fast and pray, teach us with the to mourn our sins and close by thee stay.

3. As though didst hunger bear, and thirst, so teach us gracious Lord, to die to self, and chiefly live by thy most holy word.

5. Abide with us, that so, this life of suffering over past, and Easter of unending joy we may attain at last.

Lesson 1: Joel 2:1-2,12-17

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

Hymn # 352 *It's Me*

It's me it's me, it's me O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. It's me, it's me, it's me O Lord standing in the

need of prayer. Not my brother, not my sister, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. Not my brother, not my sister, but it's me O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.

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

Sermon

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 Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation. During the 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 meditation on God's Holy Word. To make a right beginning of repentance and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel 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.

Repent, and believe the Gospel.

Holy Communion

May the almighty and merciful God, who desired 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.

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal with Blessing