

## Ash Wednesday

March 5, 2025

### Prelude and Chimes

#### \*Call to Worship (Joel 2:2-18)

Leader: Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast;  
call a solemn assembly; gather the people.

People: **We come in true repentance, young and old,  
all your beloveds, joyful and sorrow-filled.**

Leader: Return to God with all your hearts.

People: **We turn to God, repenting the wrong we have done  
and the good we have left undone.**

Leader: Rend your hearts and not your garments.

People: **God is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

#### \*Hymn #13: "O My Soul, Bless Your Creator"

#### \*Invocation

Holy One, open our hearts, lips, minds, and spirits, and we will declare your praise. We gather in your name and in your presence to worship you, to reorient our lives in your kingdom, and to direct our attention toward you. May your power flow through us as spirit meets spirit. As we reflect upon your goodness and the needs of the world, stir our hearts toward compassion and our lives toward active participation in your realm. Hear our prayers, delight in our songs, and speak through our words. May it be so. Amen.

#### Scripture Readings

Joel 2:1-2; 12-17

Psalms 51:1-17

#### \*Prayer of Confession

Eternal and most merciful God, we are children of dust and unworthy of the favors and goodness you shower upon us. We have not loved as you have loved us, nor have we lived as we ought, and our years are soon gone. God, have mercy upon us. Lift us above every past regret and present failure; reveal to us our true selves; and give us grace to accept your mercy and courage to live by your promise. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace. We have no other hope save in you. Amen.

## **Ritual of Breath and Ashes**

Leader: Each day invites us to remember the sacred nature of life. Every breath we take, whether unconscious and easy or labored and shaky, connects us with creation. We inhale elements of stardust, shaped and reshaped from the dawn of time and Creator's "Let there be" declarations. We too are dust creations, from the richness of the earth and the vastness of the universe, until our last breath returns us as seeds of new life, new being, new creation.

**People: We are dust. We are oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, calcium, and phosphorus.**

Leader: We are made of stars. We will reshape the universe.

**People: We are God's good creation.**

Leader: Inhale the elements of life. Take a breath, deep or shallow, in gratitude that you have received the breath of life. (pause) Exhale and fuel creation around you with the essence of your being. (pause) Inhale and exhale and remember that you are part of God's beloved creation.

**People: We are God's beloved creation.**

Leader: You are dust and so much more than that. You are living, breathing, powerful co-creators with the One who set the heavens and the earth into motion. Your life matters, and you have the power of God at work in you and through you.

**People: We are the Holy One's co-creators.**

Marking with Ashes:                    *"Remember you are God's beloved dust/stardust/creation."*

**\*Hymn #100:** "All Praise Be Yours, My God, This Night"

### **\*Benediction**

As you go and embark on this season of reflection and introspection,  
Remember you are beloved  
Stardust, breath, and seed,  
Agents of transformation,  
Participants of the kingdom,  
And the Body of Christ on Earth.  
Go, with the power of the Spirit, the love of the Source, and the courage of Christ  
To live this precious life  
In Boldness and Faith.

### **\*Postlude**

*Liturgical resources for Ash Wednesday Year C was written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.*