

**Main Street United Methodist Church
Ash Wednesday Service**

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

6:15 pm

Prelude

Greeting

Minister: We gather as pilgrims on a journey of faith.

People: We come seeking awareness of God's presence as we travel on.

Minister: We come seeking light for our darkness, strength in our weakness.

People: Shine in our hearts, O God, with the light of your love. Make your presence known through Jesus the Christ.

Opening Prayer (In Unison)

Most Holy God, your Son came to save sinners; we come to this season of repentance, confessing our unworthiness, asking for new and honest hearts, and the healing power of your forgiveness. Grant us this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Hymn No. 340**

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy

Restoration

Old Testament

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

The Reverend Dr. C. J. Lupo

Psalter Reading

Psalm 51:1-17

The Reverend Dr. C. J. Lupo

Leader: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;

People: According to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

Leader: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

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

Leader: Against 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.

People: Behold, I was born into iniquity, and I have been sinful since my mother conceived me.

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

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

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

People: Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

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

People: Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your holy Spirit from me.

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

People: Then I will teach transgressors your way, and sinners will return to you.

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

People: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth send forth your praise.

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

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

Anthem

Who At My Door is Standing

arr. K. Lee Scott

Chancel Choir

Call to Confession

Minister: Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to your God.

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

Minister: We know well our misdeeds. Our sin is ever before us. We pray that God will wash away our guilt and cleanse us from our sin. Let us ask God to bring light into the dark places of our lives and to confront us with our hidden and secret sins.

Prayer of Confession

Minister: Hear us, Oh God, as we confess our preoccupation with ourselves,

People: Oh God, open our hearts.

Minister: As we confess the bitterness of past losses not turned over to you,

People: Oh God, open our hearts.

Minister: As we confess the private comforts to which we cling,

People: Oh God, open our hearts.

Minister: As we confess the fear of failure that keeps us from following your will for us into the future,

People: Oh God, open our hearts.

Minister: As we confess our broken relationships,

People: Oh God, open our hearts. Here and now, oh God, we bring our secret sins to you, as all lies open in your sight. Let your forgiveness be our healing power of forgiveness, brought to us by Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

*Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Reverend Jim Dennis, Jr.

Homily

The Reverend Jim Dennis, Jr.

Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline

Silent Prayer

Prayer of Thanksgiving over the Ashes

The Imposition of Ashes

(You are invited to come and kneel or stand at the altar to receive ashes as an outward sign of inner repentance. With the ashes, the minister will make the sign of the cross on the forehead of all who come to the altar. Those not wishing to receive the ashes are invited to use this time for silent prayer and reflection.)

***Hymn No. 402**

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian

I Want to be a Christian

***Benediction**

(Please Exit in Silence.)

**Congregation Stands*

Nursery Provided

Impositions of Ashes

The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Christian worship. In Old Testament times, to place ashes upon the head was a sign of grief and mourning.

The Imposition of Ashes can be a powerful nonverbal way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation. This practice is the historic focus of Ash Wednesday observance and gave the day its name.

During the imposition of the Ashes, the minister quotes from Genesis: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

This is a symbolic gesture, which proclaims to our world that we are sinners, that our sins are a serious offense to God and devastating to us, but thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we are given the victory over sin and death.

Come, all who are willing, to kneel and receive this sign of our faith.

Prayer Pretzels

In a fifth century manuscript there is a picture of a pretzel. Pretzels were a Lenten food and thus only eaten during the period as a reminder to pray more often. In Lent, Christians made unleavened bread and shaped the dough in the form of two crossed arms to remind themselves to pray. The bread was called "little arms" -- "bracellae," later called "Brezel" or "pretzel."