

COMMUNITY ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 17, 2021



PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Bob Ruggieri,
Mt. Nebo UMC

CALL TO WORSHIP

God of all creation,
ble ss us with your presence.
God of love and restoration,
ble ss us with your joy.
God of the life and wisdom,
ble ss us with your Holy Spirit.
God of truth and justice,
grant us discipline to follow your way.

Juli Blood,
Willow Brook SDA

OLD TESTAMENT READING: PSALM 51

Pastor Karl Muhl bach,
Trinity Lutheran

HYMN: *Nearer to the Heart of God*

UMH #472

OPENING PRAYER:

Pastor Suzanne Jones
Benevola/Salem UMC

Loving God, we seek your presence here today even while we acknowledge that we often hide from you. Draw us out of our hiding places and into the light of your grace and love, and there teach us to worship you in spirit and truth. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Pastor Ron Kurtz,
Mt. Bethel/Mt. Lena Cooperative Parish

HYMN: *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

UMH #400

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Oscar Rodrigues

Great and merciful God: You created us in your own divine image, but we would rather make you over into our image, expecting and demanding far less of ourselves. At the opening of this season of penitence, we pray for courage and honesty, that our self-examination may be searching and specific rather than safely general. Save us, Holy Creator, from being satisfied with feeling sorry for the evil we have done – or condoned or ignored – and for the good we have failed to do. Move us rather to explore what we can do as we move forward in your forgiveness and love to be the light you designed us to be. May these ashes, symbol of penitence, remind us of the cost of that forgiveness. In the name of him who, though subject to all temptations, was alone without sin, Jesus Christ, our compassionate Lord. **Amen.**

NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Pastor Suzanne Jones
Benevola/Salem UMC

SERMON: *Good from the Wrong Motives*

Pastor Bob Ruggieri
Mt. Nebo UMC

PRAISE SONG: *Amazing Grace My Chains are Gone*

WLV

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE:

Pastor Nancy Green

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 was also a time when person 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 invited 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 meditating on God's Holy Word.

Let us pray:

O Lord Remind us often when we are feeling proud, arrogant, beyond reproach, pleased with ourselves, self-sufficient in our ways, that for such as us, and better, and worse, you walked a road that took you to a cruel cross, and rose again to show us where we might look for rescue as from this lofty perch we fall. Amen.

MEDITATIVE INSTRUMENTAL: *Dust in the Wind*

THANKSGIVING AND IMPOSTION OF THE ASHES:

Pastor Karl Muhlbach
Trinity Lutheran

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.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

Pastor Ron Kurtz,
Mt. Bethel/Mt. Lena Cooperative Parish

May the almighty and merciful God, who desires not the death of any sinner but that all should turn from wickedness and live, accept your repentance, forgive your sins, and restore you by the Holy Spirit to newness of life. **Amen.**

HYMN: *Sweet Hour of Prayer*

UMH #496

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING:

Pastor Bob Ruggieri
Mt. Nebo UMC