

St. Helens First United Methodist Church

Ash Wednesday Service
February 17, 2021

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER (Responsive)

Behold, now is the acceptable time.
Today is the day of God's salvation.

**We tremble in fear and anticipation
at the nearness of a God so great and powerful.**

Return with all your heart,
with weeping, fasting, and mourning.

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

Be reconciled to God, through Christ Jesus,
and receive a new and right spirit within.

**We will fast and pray as an inner discipline,
preparing ourselves for faithful discipleship.**

SCRIPTURE READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

READER: This is the Word of God for the people of God.

PEOPLE: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM: Lamb of God

Kathy Hale

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

READER: This is the Word of God for the people of God.

PEOPLE: Thanks be to God.

ASH WEDNESDAY MESSAGE

INVITATION TO OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ...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.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

CLOSING PRAYER (Unison)

We make a show of our faith and devotion on far too many occasions, Lord. We pride ourselves in our eloquent yet insincere prayers, fooling ourselves that you give credence to such nonsense. We forget that you already know our needs long before we pray. We store up treasures on earth, rather than in heaven. O God, we earnestly seek your forgiveness. Return us to your secret place of divine wisdom and holy mystery—the place where you are always ready to meet us, the inner chamber of our hearts—where we worship you in spirit and truth. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Created from dust, held together by God's extravagant love, may we turn away from sin and leave today embracing God's love. **Amen.**

