

Hopewell UMC  
February 17, 2021  
*Ash Wednesday*

**Instrumental Music**

**Welcome**

**Pastor Wendy**

**Announcements**

**Pastor Wendy**

**Call to Worship** (by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.)

We are invited—

**Into the story, Into this place, Into this hour of worship.**

We are invited—

**Into reflection, Into community, Into our own spiritual journeys.**

We are invited—

**The broken and bruised, The hopeful, the new, The faithful, the doubting, The wondering, the waiting.**

We are invited—

**Because God so loved;**

So listen, trust the invitation, and bring your whole self.

**All are invited here.**

**Opening Hymn**

**Just As I Am, Without One Plea**

**UMH 357, v 1 &3**

**Call to Confession**

Ash Wednesday is a special day because it marks the start of something new. We are standing at the door of a journey into deeper faith, and God is inviting us in. However, we know that we cannot grow deeper and be transformed without God's help. So as we begin this season, we confess together, asking for God's participation in this new beginning. We are asking God to hold open the door. Let us pray:

**Prayer of Confession**(Adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org)

**Holy God—We know that you are near, For you are always here, gathered among us, just a breath away. And despite knowing your nearness, we still stumble over ourselves, unsure of how to pray. Bring our hearts into the room.**

**So often we talk to you like a stranger, Praying prayers of small talk about the weather and surface level concerns. We keep genuine fear and doubt tucked into corners, out of sight, out of mind. Bring our hearts into the room.**

**And so often we try to think our way to you, As if we could use logic or our minds alone to explain your great unknown. We forget what we knew as children; we forget how to feel our way to you. Bring our hearts into the room.**

**And too regularly, we limit our experience of you to one hour a Sunday, Missing your constant invitation into the holiness all around us. Forgive us. Guide us. Bring our hearts into the room.**

**We are here, God. We want to begin again. Bring our hearts into the room. Amen.**

**Words of Forgiveness** (by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.)

Friends, whether you are standing at the door of a deeper faith journey, Unsure of what comes next, Or running your way through that threshold, You are claimed, forgiven, and loved by God.

**Again and again, we are forgiven. Again and again, we are loved. Again and again, we are invited in.**

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

**Amen.**

**Hymn**

**Have Thine Own Way, Lord**

**UMH 382 v 1-2**

**Prayer of Illumination** (Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org)

Creator God, There is a rumbling in us that won't let go. It stirs in us like the wind stirs leaves—inviting us to move, drawing us forth. When we're quiet, we know that rumble is the Holy Spirit, Dancing love awake in us. So we're here. And we're still. And we're quiet. And on this first day of Lent, we're asking you to draw near. As we hear your scripture read aloud, open the door for us to move. Invite us in. Rumble us awake. Gratefully we pray, Amen.

**Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 58:1-12**

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. <sup>2</sup>Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

<sup>3</sup>“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers.

<sup>4</sup>Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. <sup>5</sup>Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? <sup>6</sup>Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? <sup>7</sup>Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

<sup>8</sup>Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. <sup>9</sup>Then

you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, <sup>10</sup>if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. <sup>11</sup>The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. <sup>12</sup>Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

**Hymn**

**Have Thine Own Way, Lord**

**UMH 382 v 3-4**

**Gospel Lesson: Matthew 6:1-21**

<sup>1</sup>“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup>“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>7</sup>“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup>“Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. <sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup>And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup>And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. <sup>14</sup>For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; <sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

<sup>16</sup>“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.

<sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is the word of God, for all God's people. **Thanks be to God.**

**Message** *Again & Again, We're Invited In*

**Hymn** **This is a Day of New Beginnings** **UMH, v 4-5**

**Invitation to Lenten Discipline** (UMC Book of Worship, 1992)

**Thanksgiving Over the Ashes** (UMC Book of Worship, 1992)

**Imposition of Ashes**

**Hymn** **Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days** **UMH 269, v1-2**

**Holy Communion**

**Hymn** **Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days** **UMH 269, v 3-5**

**Affirmation of Faith** (by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org)

**We believe in an inviting God  
Who invites the poor and the sick,  
The outcast and the lonely,  
The immigrant and the refugee,  
The awkward and the abrasive,  
The young and the innocent.  
We believe God invites the best and the worst—  
In all of us.**

**We believe God invites us to:  
A life of faith,  
A crowded table,  
A messy church,  
A deeper truth,  
A resilient joy,  
A place to belong,  
A family among strangers,  
A world that is just,  
And a love that knows no bounds.**

**We believe this invitation exists for all people.  
We believe this invitation exists for us.**

**And when we miss the call or ignore the invite,  
We believe that God invites us again.  
Thanks be to God for that invitational Spirit. Amen.**

**Spoken Benediction** (Adapted, by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org)

As you leave this space,  
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.  
May your arms hold those in need.  
May your feet walk toward justice.  
May your heart trust its worth.  
May your soul dance in God's grace.  
And may this be your rhythm—  
Again and again and again,  
Until God's promised day.  
Remember this...for some in this world, love is a stranger, may they find us to be the most generous of friends.  
In the name of God the Lover, Jesus the Beloved Son, and the Holy Illuminator, Love itself,  
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.  
Amen.

**Musical Benediction**      **"Go Now in Peace"**

*As our time of worship together ends, our praise for God continues and our worship through witness and service in the world begins.*

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**Lenten Services:** Information about Lenten services is attached, including available small group studies (in-person or on-line) and devotional cards. We will be having both in-person (12:30 pm) and on-line (6:30 pm) services on Ash Wednesday. If the in-person services need to be cancelled due to inclement weather, an email will be sent out by 9:00 am, as well as posted on Facebook and in the comments of the Ash Wednesday YouTube video.

Wed., February 17<sup>th</sup>, **Ash Wednesday**, options:

- 12:30pm, in-person service with ashes & communion (weather permitting, we will determine by noon on Wednesday)
- 6:30pm, prerecorded service premiers on Youtube (watch anytime after 6:30)  
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21, Isaiah 58:1-12  
*"Again and Again, We're Invited In"*

Sunday, February 21, First Sunday in Lent, Mark 1:9-15, Genesis 9:8-17  
*Again and Again, God Meets Us*

Sunday, February 28, Second Sunday in Lent, Mark 8:31-9:8, Psalm 22:23-31  
*Again and Again, We Are Called to Listen*

Sunday, March 7, Third Sunday in Lent, John 2:13-22, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25  
*Again and Again, We Are Shown the Way*

Sunday, March 14, Fourth Sunday in Lent, John 3:14-21, Ephesians 2:1-10  
*Again and Again, We Are Shown the Way*

Sunday, March 21, Fifth Sunday in Lent, John 12:20-33, Jeremiah 31, 31-34  
*Again and Again, We Are Reformed*

Sunday, March 28, Palm/Passion Sunday, John 12:1-19  
*Again and Again, We Draw on Courage*

Thursday, April 1, Maundy Thursday, John 13:1-17, 31b-35  
*Again and Again, We are Held Together*

Friday, April 2, Good Friday, John 19:1-30  
*Again and Again, We Find Ourselves Here*

Sunday, April 4, Easter, Mark 16:1-8  
*Again and Again, The Sun Rises*