

AN ORDER OF CELEBRATION FOR THE GATHERED COMMUNITY

Woodridge United Methodist Church

Wednesday, March 5th, 2025

Ash Wednesday

## Prelude

## Call to Worship

**Pastor Dave:** Tear your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.  
*(Joel 2:13; John 4:24)*

## Invocation

**Charlotte:** God, who sent your only Son to forgive the sins of humanity and grant salvation to the believers through the blood of the cross: On this first day of the Lenten season, Ash Wednesday, we come before you with humble hearts. We come relying only on the cross of Jesus. Instead of tearing the clothing that covers our bodies, we tear our hearts and humbly bow before you, wearing ashes instead of crowns. Have mercy on us and pour your grace upon us. Please accept our worship on this Ash Wednesday and grant us the grace of forgiveness and the joy of salvation. We pray in Jesus' name.

**Many Voices: Amen.**

## Hymn

"Just As I Am, Without One Plea"

UMH #357

## Responsive Reading

**Pastor Dave:** The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

**Many Voices: The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?**

**Pastor Dave:** When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh,

**Many Voices: My adversaries and foes—they shall stumble and fall.**

**Pastor Dave:** Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;

**Many Voices: Though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.**

**Pastor Dave:** One thing I asked of the Lord, that I will seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,

**Many Voices: To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.**

**Pastor Dave:** For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;

**Many Voices: He will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.**

**Pastor Dave:** Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me,

**Many Voices: And I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord. (Psalm 27:1-6)**

## Prayer of Confession

**Many Voices: God, who sees the heart of humanity! We confess and repent of all the sins hidden deep within our hearts. We remember the people of Nineveh during Jonah's time, who repented from the king to the livestock without exception. Like them, we sit in ashes and repent of our sins. Though we claimed with our mouths to rely on you, our hearts relied on material wealth, health, and honor, consumed by greed and desire. Outwardly, we claimed to follow you, but in reality, we followed false idols. Lord, with sincere hearts, we repent of all**

**our sins and the hardened, stubborn lives we have lived. Grant us the grace of forgiveness. Lord, create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. We pray this prayer of confession in the name of Jesus, who bore the cross for us. Amen.**

*[Silent Prayer]*

## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

**Pastor Dave:** Listen to the word of God for those who truly confess and repent of their sins with all their hearts, relying on the merit of the blood of Jesus Christ:

"To those who mourn in Zion, he will give a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory." (*Isaiah 61:3*)

## **Scripture Readings**

Old Testament Lesson

Genesis 3:17-19 (*NRSVue*)

New Testament Lesson

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (*NRSVue*)

## **Special Music**

"Nearer, My God to Thee" UMH #528

Pastor Dave

## **Sermon**

### **Thanksgiving Over the Ashes**

**Pastor Dave:** God, who created us from the dust, may this ash remind us that we are mortal and fill us with a repentant heart. Help us to remember that eternal life is given only by your grace. We pray in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Many Voices: Amen.**

### **Imposition of Ashes**

**Pastor Dave:** Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. (*Genesis 3:19*)

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **Prayer of Dedication**

**Pastor Dave:** Lord, we confess that we are dust.

**Many Voices: O Lord, help us never forget.**

**Pastor Dave:** We confess that we are ashes.

**Many Voices: O Lord, help us never forget.**

**Pastor Dave:** We confess that we are but a handful of earth.

**Many Voices: O Lord, help us never forget.**

**Pastor Dave:** We came from the dust; teach us to value this earthly life.

**Many Voices: We came from the dust; teach us to cherish our fellow creatures made from the same dust.**

**Pastor Dave:** Since we came from dust and will return to dust, remove our pride.

**Many Voices: Since we came from dust and will return to dust, remove our greed.**

**Pastor Dave:** Since we came from dust and will return to dust, remove our anger.

**Many Voices: Do not let us merely end as dust.**

**Pastor Dave:** Breathe into our nostrils the breath of life.

**Many Voices: Do not let us merely end as dust.**

**Pastor Dave:** "Breathe on us the Holy Spirit," as you did when you said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

**Many Voices: Do not let us merely end as dust.**

**Pastor Dave:** May our lives blend the earth and spirit, heaven and earth.

**Many Voices: Amen.**

*(Adapted from "Mystery and Resistance," an Ash Wednesday litany)*

**\*Closing Hymn**

"Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling"

UMH #348

**\*Benediction**

**Pastor Dave:** Now may the grace of the blood of Jesus Christ, who forgives and saves us, the infinite love of God, who created us from the dust of the earth, and the work of the Holy Spirit, who grants us eternal life and walks with us, be upon all the children of God who have received forgiveness through the cross and resolved to live by God's grace as they go out into the world, now and forevermore.

**Many Voices: Amen.**

## Going Forth to the World

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### Notices

**Church Office Hours:**

**Monday & Tuesday: 9:00 am - Noon**

**Wednesday - Friday: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm**

We ask that you *call before visiting*.

### Offering Options

There are different options for getting your offering to the church.

- Go to the church website at [www.woodridgeumc.org/giving](http://www.woodridgeumc.org/giving).
- Text 630.449.7121 with the amount you would like to give
- Drop off in the gold mail slot next to the east door of the church.
- Mail your offering.