

**Astoria First United Methodist Church**  
**February 17, 2021**

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*Ash Wednesday*

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**INVITATION TO GATHER**

**Pastor Michael**

The day of the Lord is coming! O people, repent! Believe in the gospel! Come, let us turn and follow the Lord! In the image of God, loving, grace-giving, and wise, we are created to be the hands, hearts, and feet of Jesus. We gather on this Ash Wednesday, not because we must, not to puff ourselves up, but to start out on the trail leading to the resurrection.

**CENTERING MUSIC**

*(Instrumental)*  
**“Wait For the Lord”**

**Mary Frances Gunn**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**Pastor Michael**

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**“Excerpts from Joel 2”**

*“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; “Spare your people, O LORD”*

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

**“Dust and Ashes”**  
**Brian Wren & Davis Haas**

**Mary Frances Gunn**

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**“Excerpts from Psalm 51”**

*“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Restore to me the joy of your salvation,”*

## **CALL TO RECONCILIATION**

**Pastor Michael**

### **UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS**

We bring our burdens and our sins to You, O Christ, who bears the heavy load for us. We place upon You our excuses, our shortcomings, our anger and our desire, knowing that You can remove these sins from us and restore us to life. We confess that we have gone astray. We confess that we have not loved You fully and have not loved our neighbor as ourselves. We confess that we have not fully loved even our very selves. Forgive us of our sins. Help us to turn back to You. Restore what has been broken, transform what has been twisted, find what has been lost, so we may be the living, loving image of You in creation. In the Precious Name of Christ, we pray. **AMEN**

### **TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION**

#### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

The heart of the matter is that we can find our treasures in heaven, and also on earth, so long as we are forgiven and set free of our burdens and sin. God comes close to hear our prayers, to fill our emptiness, to walk with us through the ashes of uncertainty, to journey with us in this holiest of seasons. During a pandemic of uncertainty, we can trust in the comforting, the forgiving, the restoring heart of the God who loves us. Thanks be to God, you are forgiven! **AMEN.**

### **REFLECTING ON THE ASHES OF THIS YEAR**

**Pastor Michael**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.*

#### **CLOSING HYMN**

***“Change My Heart, O God”***

**Congregation**

**FWS # 2152**

### **IN SILENCE LEAVE THE SERVICE IN SILENCE**