



February 18, 2015

*Remember that you are dust  
and to dust you shall return*

ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
PARK AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

**Please Enter the Sanctuary in Silence and Be in Prayer**

**Prelude**                      *Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*                      Willan

**The Chiming of the Hour**

**The Greeting**

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

**God's mercy endures forever.**

**\*The Opening Hymn**              *Come and Find the Quiet Center*                      TFWS 2128

**The Responsive reading of the Psalm:** Psalm 51: 1-17                      UMH 785

**\*The Gospel Lesson**    Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

**The Celebration of Our Children**    Lanta Carroll

**The Anthem**                      *Dust and Ashes*                      Chancel Choir

**The Meditation**    Rev. Ellen Hopkins

**The Hymn**                      *Lord, I Want to Be a Christian*                      UMH 402

**The Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline**

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 persons 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 invite 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.

To make a right beginning of repentance,  
 and as a mark of our mortal nature,  
 let us kneel before our Creator and Redeemer.

### **The 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.**

### **The Confession and Pardon**

Rev. Dr. Tony Lankford

*O, God, when we pause to look back at our lives on this Ash Wednesday, we realize that we have been weighed in the balance and found wanting.*

***We have neglected to do good when it was in our power to do so.***

*We, like believers of old, have pulled down your altars and erected idols crafted in our own image.*

***We have turned our backs on the poor, choosing instead to criminalize poverty.***

*We have ignored the cries of the motherless, the fatherless, the widow and the widower choosing instead to turn children and the elderly into the new poor.*

***We have bankrupted the country with our greed and consumed more than our share of the world's riches.***

*We have not dealt honorably with our enemies or our friends, and we have feigned a place in the company of the righteous.*

***Forgive us, O God, for turning sackcloth and ashes into a fashion statement by pursuing form without substance.***

*Forgive us, O God, for the times we have neglected to provide our children and our world an authentic example of Christianity.*

***As we begin the journey of these forty days***

***Wash us, O God and we shall be clean***

***Cleanse us, O Lord, and we shall be made whole. Amen.***

*(Silence)*

**Words of Assurance**

*Hear the Good News. The LORD, our God, is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love (Joel 2:13).*

**God hears the earnest cries of the repentant and forgives our sins.**

(The Rev. Dr. Safiyah Fosua. © General Board of Discipleship,  
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**The Great Thanksgiving**

Rev. Ellen Hopkins  
UMH 13

**The Imposition of the Ashes and Holy Communion**

*(Your offering may be left at the altar rail as you kneel for Holy Communion. The offering collected will be divided equally between the United Methodist Conference Homeless Offering and the Park Avenue Baptist Mission Fund.)*

<b>Communion Music</b>	<i>What Wondrous Love Is This?</i>	UMH 292
<b>*The Closing Hymn</b>	<i>More Love to Thee, O Christ</i>	UMH 453
<b>*The Benediction</b>		

***Please Depart in Silence***

\*Congregation, please stand in body or spirit.

**Worship Notes:** Purple is the liturgical color for Lent and is used on our altar and cross as a sign of penitence. The handmade wooden cross in the chancel symbolizes both our reaching for God through the cross and our clinging to the cross for our salvation.