

PRELUDE

HYMN *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* No. 384

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: God of goodness, God of grace,

All: bless us with your presence.

Leader: God of hope, God of love,

All: bless us with your mercy.

Leader: God of the present, God of the future,

All: bless us with vision to see your will.

Leader: God of truth, God of justice,

All: grant us with discipline to follow your way.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, maker of everything and judge of all that you have made, from the dust of the earth you have formed us and from the dust of death you would raise us up.

By the redemptive power of the cross, create in us clean hearts and put within us a new spirit, that we may repent of our sins and lead lives worthy of your calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN *I Need Thee Every Hour (stanzas 1, 2, 5)* No. 397

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

THE WORD OF GRACE Rev. Greg Markins

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 3:19b
"From dust you came, and to dust you shall return."

THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES

L: 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

P: Amen.

HYMN *Sweet Hour of Prayer* No. 496

INVITATION TO TABLE, PRAYER OF CONFESSION & PARDON

L: Christ our Lord invites to his table, all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sins and seek to live in peace with one another, therefore let us confess our sins before God and one another:

L: Merciful God, How many times in a day could we choose love?

P: How many times could we choose justice?

L: How many times could we speak kindly to ourselves?

P: How many times could we offer grace?

L: How many times, God? And how often do we miss it?

P: Forgive us for choosing the path you did not travel.

L: Forgive us for hitching our horse to the world's measure of goodness, instead of yours.

P: Return our hearts to you, and guide us continually, even in the parched places.

L: With gratitude we pray, (silent confession)

Family of faith, when a baby is learning to walk, the parents do not criticize the baby for falling.....We are forgiven. We are invited. We belong. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

L: Lift your hearts.

P: We lift them to the Lord.

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

P: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

L: Blessed are you, O God, who with your Word and Holy Spirit created all things and called them good.....Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

THE 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for Thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

RECEIVING THE ASHES & PARTAKING OF THE BREAD & CUP

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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BENEDICTION

L: As you leave this place, may God bless you with seeking.

P: May we seek out the hungry & weary.

L: Seek the good in every person you pass.

P: May we seek out the hopeful & the faithful.

May we seek God in each of us.

L: As you seek and as you wonder, may you find what you are looking for.

P: In the name of our loving God, who is always seeking us, may we go now in peace. Amen.

DEPART IN SILENCE**CHURCH STAFF**

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STEELE MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FEBRUARY 21, 2023

**ASH WEDNESDAY**

Today marks the beginning of the season of Lent. Ash Wednesday occurs forty days before Easter, excluding six Sundays (which are considered feast days), and recalls the Israelites' forty years in the desert and Jesus' forty days in the wilderness. Lent is an opportunity to go deep into our hearts and the souls of our communities, and to recognize the horror and depth of our estrangement from God. In practicing the disciplines of Lent, such as self-examination and repentance, we seek methodically to put things right.