

*Welcome to this hour of worship at*  
**Shiloh United Church of Christ**

2251 Willow Road, York, Pennsylvania 17408

717-764-3569

ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 17, 2021

*Shiloh United Church of Christ is called to show Christ's love for all  
through witness, word, and worship.*

**Prelude**

"I Lay My Sins on Jesus" . . . . . Kendall

**Meditation**

*Lord God, by Your Word  
Fill me with a Spirit of  
Repentance and Forgiveness  
A Spirit of Hope and Trust  
A Spirit of Gratitude and Thanksgiving  
A Spirit of Love and Servanthood  
A Spirit of Discipleship and Commitment  
A Spirit of Obedience and Humility.  
In Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Silence*

**\*Call to Worship** (*Genesis 2:7; 3: 19 Psalm 104: 29-30; John 1: 18*)

One: Friends and neighbors, in the middle of this season of Covid-19,  
we pause to observe Ash Wednesday together as a faith community.

**All: We remember that God made us from fragile, blessed dust  
and breathes through us the breath of life and love.**

One: From dust we are created in God's image  
and to God's good dust we shall return.

**All: With dust and oil we claim the mark of God's beloved creature.**

One: Today we begin our 40-day Lenten journey  
to discover who we are created to be as God's beloved.

**All: In daily practices of prayer and service  
we will embark upon this Lenten journey.**

One: We follow Jesus, God's Beloved Child,  
bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh  
in whom we see God's image most clearly.

**All: So come, let us pray for strength and imagination  
to follow Jesus wherever he will lead us this Lent.**

*Silence*

**\*Opening Hymn**

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling . . . . . No. 43

(Link - [https://hymnary.org/text/love\\_divine\\_all\\_love\\_excelling\\_joy\\_of\\_he](https://hymnary.org/text/love_divine_all_love_excelling_joy_of_he) )

## Unison Prayer of Invocation

One: Let us pray!

**All: Author of Life, you meet us in the shadows and protect us. You dance with us in the sun. You give us the breath of life and offer us eternal life. In this time of worship, open our hearts, our minds, and our hands so that we may love you and your creation in the way that Jesus did. In his name we pray. Amen.**

## Psalm of Repentance ( Psalm 51)

One: Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins.

**All: Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my shameful deeds— they haunt me day and night.**

One: Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight.

You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just.

**All: For I was born a sinner — yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.**

**But you desire honesty from the heart, so you can teach me to be wise in my inmost being.**

One: Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

**All: Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. Don't keep looking at my sins.**

**Remove the stain of my guilt.**

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me again the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

**All: Then I will teach your ways to sinners, and they will return to you. Forgive me, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. Unseal my lips, O Lord, that I may praise you.**

One: You would not be pleased with sacrifices, or I would bring them. If I brought you a burnt offering, you would not accept it.

**All: The sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. A broken and repentant heart, O God, you will not despise.**

One: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**All: But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. —1 John 1:8-9**

*Silence*

## Words of Assurance of Blessing:

Know that God loves you, forgives you, welcomes you and rejoices in you. **Amen.**

Choir – Just As I Am, I Come

## Meditation on Letting Go

*Tonight begins our journey through Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.*

*And like any well-prepared traveler, we confess that we want to pack our bags to make sure we are comfortable for our 6-week journey.*

*But Ash Wednesday is about leaving baggage behind and braving the unknown carrying nothing but the mark of God's beloved.*

*In this vulnerable place, we confess that we want to be surrounded by all of the things that make us feel better about ourselves, including things we think that God needs in order to love us.*

*And yet God whispers to us that we are made in the divine image and that faithfulness to that knowledge is all we need for the journey of life.*

*So let us ponder what it is that we may let go of this Lent, in order to help us hear more clearly the stories of Jesus' extravagant love for all, and to follow him more bravely and confidently.*

*Silence*

First Lesson: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Second Lesson: 2 Cor. 5:20b—6:10

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

**Sermon** ..... “Agape Anonymous”

**\*Hymn**

“Sweet Hour of Prayer” ..... No. 505

(Link: <https://hymnary.org/hymn/NCH1995/505> )

**Prayers of Intercession and the Lord’s Prayer**

Let us pray for the needs of the world, saying, Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Holy God, as the Ordinary season now turns to Lent, we pray that you will guide us in the days ahead. As we journey with Jesus Christ, give us an abiding sense of your presence, an unguarded sense of ourselves, and an awareness of the needs of this world.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Loving God, as we are marked with the ashes of earth, we bring before you the frailty of our very human lives: the fragility of our health, the tenuousness of our accomplishments and plans, the changing nature of even our closest relationships.

Grant us patience in suffering and healing from our ills. Give us, in equal measure, humility and hope in our pursuits. Bind us in covenantal love that is both constant yet able to change according to the needs and circumstances before us.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Just God, you call us to loosen the bonds of injustice, to care for those in need, to lift the burdens that bind others. We ask you to increase our courage and our will to work for the freedom and peace you envision and demand. We pray for an end to warfare and conflict, accepting our calling to be peacemakers. We pray for an end to hunger and homelessness, knowing we are called to share our bread and to open our doors. We pray for an end to false righteousness, evil speech, and shallow piety in our lives, in the church, in our national life, and among all the nations.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Eternal God, we pray that your kingdom will come in fullness; that what is perishable will be raised imperishable; and that death itself will be swallowed up in victory; through Jesus Christ, our Savior who has taught us to pray saying:

**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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Invitation to the Offering**

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. *Ephesians 5:2*

**\*Offertory Response**

“Doxology” ..... No. 780

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, You heavenly host:Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**\*Prayer of Dedication of Gifts and Self**

**We come to You with open and humble hearts as we are thankful for the blessings You give us daily. God of grace, we pray that as we give You our offerings this evening that we all will think about the fact that all we are given is Yours. May we find our full and true identity in our gratitude for our lives and callings as Your people. Accept, we pray, these offerings with our thankful gladness, Lord. We bless your Holy Name! Amen**

**Distribution of Ashes**

*You may receive ashes on your forehead or the back of your hand.*

Pastor: Creator God who fashioned us from the dust of the earth,  
bless these ashes that they may a sign of our mortality,  
and a reminder of your forgiving grace  
through the death and resurrection of your Son,  
Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*Those who desire may come forward where ashes will be imposed.*

Pastor: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. **Amen.**  
*Silence*

Pastor: Listen to the comforting assurance of the grace of God, promised in the  
Gospel to all who repent and believe:

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might  
be saved through him”. – John 3:17  
Believe the Good news!

**All: In Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven! Thanks be to God! Amen**

**Closing Hymn**

“More Love to You, O Christ” .....No. 456  
(Link: <https://hymnary.org/hymn/NCH1995/456> )

**Benediction**

Blessings, like God’s love, are not one-way experiences.  
As you have been blessed with the mark of God’s love  
you are now called to go out from this place and bless others.  
May the God who created you create opportunities of serving others.  
May the Christ who teaches you teach you during Lent how to love all.  
And may the Spirit of Gentleness be your companion along this Lenten journey.  
**Amen.**

**Postlude**

“A Song in Lent” .....Taylor

**OFFERING** for Ash Wednesday, Lenten/Easter. will be designated as follows:

Equally between the Bell Family Shelter and the Dover Food Bank. If more than \$2,000 is collected, an additional contribution be given to the York County Food Bank.

Pastor  
Director of Music  
Organist  
Liturgist

Rev. Melinda LaMontagne, Ph.D.  
Stephanie Limbert  
Sandra Bamberger  
Dani Bentzel