

**You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Joel reminds us that God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. With great mercy, God relents from punishing and calls us into fullness of life. In God’s grace, know that you are forgiven.

In God’s grace, know that you are forgiven.

In God’s mercy, know that you are made new.

In God’s mercy, know that you are made new.

In God’s love, know that you are made whole.

In God’s love, know that you are made whole.

*Scifres, Mary; Beu, B.J., The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020: Worship Planning Resources for Every Sunday of the Year (pp. 41-43).
Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition*

PASSING OF THE PEACE

HYMN

“JUST AS I AM”

#357, VV. 5-6

Just as I am, thou wilt receive;
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thy love unknown
has broken every barrier down;
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

BENEDICTION

As we start this season of Lent, let us remember that God requires contrite hearts and broken spirits. Let us remember who we are: God’s children, rebellious and confused, yet seeking love and direction. May God bless us with love, with the peace of Jesus Christ, and with the communion of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Mosser, David. The Abingdon Preaching Annual 2011 (p. 77). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.



Oaklette United Methodist Church
“God’s Body in this Community”

“Oaklette United Methodist Church through worship, education, and outreach, seeks to make the gospel of Jesus Christ real, as we minister to all people.”

February 18, 2026
Ash Wednesday



Welcome in the name of our Lord. A nurturing and well-supervised nursery is available for infants and young children. A cry room is also available. Please ask the greeter for further assistance and directions to these rooms.

PRELUDE

“Ah, Holy Jesus”

OPENING PRAYER

We turn to you, God of life, on this first day of Lent, as we recall our own mortality. With hearts torn open by our actions, we need your guidance and your healing forgiveness. Ready us to receive your mercy and grace, and cleanse us of the ash of human failing, that we may embrace the words you speak – words that lead to eternal life. Amen.

Scifres, Mary; Beu, B. J. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020: Worship Planning Resources for Every Sunday of the Year (pg. 41). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition

HYMN

“SUNDAY’S PALMS ARE WEDNESDAY’S ASHES” W&S #2138

Sunday’s palms are Wednesday’s ashes, as another Lent begins;
thus we kneel before our Maker in contrition for our sins.

We have marred baptismal pledges, in rebellion gone astray;
now, returning, seek forgiveness; grant us pardon, God, this day!

We have failed to love our neighbors, their offences to forgive,
have not listened to their troubles, nor have cared just how they live,
we are jealous, proud, impatient, loving over much our things;
may the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.

We are hasty to judge others, blind to proof of human need;
and our lack of understanding demonstrates our inner greed;
we have wasted earth’s resources; want and suffering we’ve ignored;
come and cleanse us, then restore us; make new hearts within us, Lord!

SCRIPTURE LESSON

JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17 NRSV

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near – a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains, a great and powerful

army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come. Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

Between the vestibule and the altar, let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

PSALM 103:8-14, adapted from the New Jerusalem Bible

The Lord is tenderness and pity, slow to anger and rich in faithful love;

His indignation does not last forever, nor his resentment remain for all time;

He does not treat us as our sins deserve, nor repay us as befits our offenses.

As the height of heaven above earth, so strong is his faithful love for those who revere him.

As the distance of east from west, so far from us does he put our faults.

As tenderly as a father treats his children, so the Lord treats those who revere him; He knows of what we are made, he remembers that we are dust.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

In preparation, present yourselves before God. Come in your brokenness, acknowledging where you have fallen short of God’s expectations and of your own.

(Time of silent reflection.)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.

The brokenness that hinders me, I lay before you.

Come in your pain, acknowledging your hurt and accepting how you have hurt others.

(Time of silent reflection.)

Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

All the pain I have in my life – the pain I have caused and the pain I feel – I lay before you.

Come in your weakness, acknowledging your lack of confidence to do what is right.

(Time of silent reflection.)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.

The weakness that holds me captive, I lay before you.

Come in your fear, acknowledging your failure to seek justice.

(Time of silent reflection.)

Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

The fear that binds me, I lay before you.

Come in your hesitancy, acknowledging your resistance to God’s call.

(Time of silent reflection.)

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 40-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 now bow before our Creator and Redeemer.

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.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

CONFESSION AFTER THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION

PSALM 51:1-17

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;

according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;

wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.

Save me from blood-guilt, O God, the God who saves me,

and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.
My hesitancy in doing your will, I lay before you.
Come in your failings, acknowledging what you have done and left undone.
(Time of silent reflection.)
Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.
The hollowness that saps my strength and leaves me lifeless, I lay before you.
All that we are, all that we have done, all that we confess, we lay before you, O God.
Relieve the weight of the burden, I lay before you. Amen.
Scifres, Mary; Beu, B.J.. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020: Worship Planning Resources for Every Sunday of the Year (p. 43). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

HYMN	“JUST AS I AM”	#357, VV. 1-2
	Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.	
	Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot, to thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.	

SCRIPTURE LESSON **2 CORINTHIANS 5:20b-6:10**
We entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God.
For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.
For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you."
Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation!
We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute.

We are treated as impostors and yet are true, as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look – we are alive, as punished and yet not killed, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.
HYMN **“JUST AS I AM”** **#357, vv. 3-4**

Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt;
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

GOSPEL LESSON **MATTHEW 6:1-16, 16-21**
“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.
“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
“And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

SERMON **REV. NED ALDERMAN**