

**First United Methodist Church of Freehold
Bulletin**

**February 14, 2024
Ash Wednesday
7:30 P.M.**

Prelude: "Be Still" David J. Evans

Introduction to Lent:

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday as a day to remember our humanity and begin a period of repentance – a turning away from sin and evil – in preparation for the joy of Easter. We are joined in our humanity by Jesus who, though he was and is God, experienced the limits of human life in solidarity with us. In Lent, we recall Jesus' time in the wilderness when he was tempted to feed, save, and glorify himself. Instead, he humbled himself before God and began a ministry of feeding, healing, and saving others so that God might be glorified. We are called to recognize the ways we have been focused on ourselves, to repent, and to follow in Jesus' way of justice and compassion.

*Call to Worship:

Leader: In the midst of darkness, we have come.

People: Heal us, Lord Jesus.

Leader: Save us from the darkness of our souls.

People: Save us, Lord Jesus.

Leader: Let us follow you and obey your commands.

People: Direct and guide us, Lord Jesus.

Leader: Brighten our lives and lift our spirits.

People: Bring us to your glorious presence, Lord Jesus. Amen.

*Opening Prayer: (In Unison)

We give thanks, Eternal One, that we do not walk through life's deserts alone. You are ever with us, especially in our loneliest valleys. You bless us with friends who share this path, those who wear with us a cross of ashes to remind us that we are only human. Quiet the rushing thoughts of our minds. In this season, may we do less, so that you may do more. Receive our songs, our confessions, and our devotion, until we rise anew with Jesus, alive forevermore. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: UMH #895

* Hymn: "My Jesus, I Love Thee" UMH #172

Scripture Reading: Exodus 16:9-12 Gilbert Healton

Prayer Song: "Even You Are Welcome" Mitch Samu

**Ash Wednesday Homily
Rev. Yoseb Jeon**

**Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline
Thanksgiving Over the Ashes
*Imposition of Ashes**

*Prayer of Confession and Pardon: (In Unison)

Maker of all, as we remember our humanity today, forgive us for forgetting the humanity of others. In our desire for help from you, we can become focused on ourselves and neglect the very things you care about. In this season of Lent, lead us in the way of repentance that is acceptable to you. May our prayers be matched by our actions, and as we receive grace, so let us give it freely. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

*Moment of Silent Confession

*Words of Assurance:

Leader: We seek help from the Giver of Life, the Defeater of Death, who loves us so much that he gave his Son that we might live abundantly. We are forgiven in the name of Jesus, and for this we give you praise, O God!

All: We are forgiven in the name of Jesus, and for this we give you praise, O God!

*Hymn: "Nearer, My God to Thee" UMH #528

Offering Time: **Giving Page:** www.freeholdmethodist.org/give

Offertory: "Once Again" Matt Redman
Yoonjung Park, Piano

*Doxology: "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" UMH #95

*Prayer of Thanksgiving: (In Unison)

Gracious and generous God, we return these gifts to you with joyful hearts. As we share this offering with others, we make space in our hearts for your Spirit to fill us, shape us, and love us. Bless, Holy Spirit, the gifts we humbly bring, that they may bring hope to the downcast and courage to those who live in fear, for you are the source of all we need. Amen.

*Closing Hymn: "Be Thou My Vision" UMH #451

*Benediction: Rev. Yoseb Jeon

*Postlude: "In Christ Alone" Koch & Craig

Scripture Passage:

⁹ Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites: 'Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.'" ¹⁰ And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ The Lord spoke to Moses, ¹² "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'" "

The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.