

Ash Wednesday



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

Rollstone Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

199 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA

Pastor: Rev. David B. Hanks 978-821-9571

Moderator: Paul Stansel 978-337-1608

Church Organist and Musician: Gavin Klein

Ash Wednesday Service

February 17, 2021

PRELUDE:

No. 1 from Suite d'orgue pour Carême

DuPont

CALL TO GATHERING

When we are thirsty we are invited, “Come to the waters.” As we prepare for this Lenten Season we come to drink deeply of the living waters offered by Jesus.

We hear the words which Jesus spoke in saying, “Come, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens. I will give you rest”

This invitation is not for a chosen few, but is extended to all. So, we come from all directions, from all walks of life. We come, the young and old, the rich and poor, believers and doubters. Come all; for you are called and loved by God. Let us now come to worship God, to journey with Jesus, to walk in the way of Christ.

CHOIR SELECTION: “Heal Me Hands of Jesus”

A CALL TO THE LENTEN SEASON

“Lent is a season of reflection and repentance. It invites us to look inside our hearts, seeing ourselves with compassion and truth — to see both our brokenness and our beauty, our failings and our faithfulness. In this season we’re inviting you to enter into a deeper commitment to the way of Jesus. You’ll have an opportunity to write your commitment upon your hearts, which will be between you and God. These commitments will be offered up to God, just as we would have burnt our written prayers, the smoke rises and our prayers and commitments shall rise up to God.

“While we will not be able to create the ashes which would have been used to create the mark of the cross upon our foreheads this night, God is aware of our individual commitments, prayers, and desire for forgiveness.

“Traditionally Lent has been a time of fasting, allowing the fast to enter into our lives as a call to prayer. You might fast from coffee — each morning being reminded that you are to be filled and energized with God’s blessings; you might fast from television — reminded to go outside and take in the drama and beauty of creation; or you might fast from fast food — reminding yourself to slow down and think about the source of our sustenance as you prepare your own meals. As the fast interrupts our normal way of being, we are reminded to be in prayer.”

“Another way of marking the season is through the addition of a spiritual discipline. You might read one of the gospels each week, getting to know Jesus

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

6 ‘Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2 ‘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. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5 ‘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. 6 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.

16 ‘And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 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.

19 ‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

MEDITATION: “Why Do We Come at the Beginning of Lent?”

RELECTIVE MUSIC

“Come and Fill Our Hearts With Your Peace”

Taize Community

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Psalm 51:1-17

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

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

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

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

6 Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

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

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

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

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.

14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

15 Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.

16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

A MOMENT OF REMEMBERING OUR BROKENNESS

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Jesus said, Come to me all of you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Friends, you may lay your burdens down here; we offer to you in their place the grace of Christ Jesus.

HYMN

“Jesus, Remember Me”

BENEDICTION

God has chosen each of us and has called us to full and abundant life. We are marked by the Spirit are with your own commitment and those of our beloved community. It is written on your head; it is written on your heart. Go in peace, walking in the light and love of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

ORGAN POSTLUDE:

Postlude

Fischer

DEPART IN PEACE