**St. John United Church of Christ**

***“In Christ We Live, Celebrate, & Serve”***

February 17, 2021 Ash Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Worship (618) 877-6060

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WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

HAND BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

A STORY FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN Matthew 6:16

“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.

PRELUDE *O Sacred Head Now Wounded*  Bach

CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER (Based on Joel 2 and Isaiah 64)

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm…let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming.

***Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart.***

Rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God,

***For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.***

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people.

***Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever.***

Let us pray:

***Eternal One, scripture tells us that “from ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.” Tonight, we wait for you. We long for you. We call on your name and bow our hearts before you. Draw us close, O God; abide with us, now and forever. Amen.***

\*HYMN ***“Abide with Me”*** Verses 1, 2, 3

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***Abide with me, fast falls the eventide; the darkness deepens: Lord, with me abide!***

***When other helpers fail, and comforts flee, help of the helpless, O abide with me.***

***Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day; earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away;***

***change and decay in all around I see: O Lord who changes not, abide with me.***

***I need your presence every passing hour; what but your grace can foil the tempter’s power?***

***Who, like yourself, my guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.***

LITANY OF CONFESSION & PARDON (Joel 2 & Psalms 50 & 51)

Remember, God says: “Return to me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow.” Let us open our hearts through confession and ask the Lord to spare us and purge us of all uncleanliness, for “the sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart.”

***“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love…Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment…***

***Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.”***

Scripture tells us God declares: “Offer to me a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me…Those who bring sacrifice honor me; to those who go the right way I will show salvation.” Believe the promise of God and give thanks. Our sins are forgiven. With a new and right spirit, we are restored to the joy of salvation.

SYMBOLIC IMPOSITION OF ASHES

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EPISTLE LESSON 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:2

SOLO *Create in Me a Clean Heart*  Mueller

GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 6:1-6

MEDITATION Private Time with God

HYMN ***“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”***  Verses 1, 2 & 3

***When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,***

***my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.***

***Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my God;***

***all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.***

***Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small;***

***love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.***

PASTORAL PRAYER & UNISON 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.***

STEWARDSHIP INVITATION & BLESSING Based on Matthew 6:21

***Lord, our most valued treasure is your Love. We give our hearts to you in response. And, we give our offerings with joyful hearts, knowing that what you most desire is our love and faithfulness. Bless our willing spirits, we pray. Amen.***

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INVITATION TO COMMUNE, AS INSPIRED BY THE SPIRIT

Adapted from *Worship Services for Lent* produced by the United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership © 1992.

Lent is a time for us to remember our human frailty.

***We have come from dust, and to dust we shall return.***

Yet we scamper along life’s way, pretending we are little gods, ones whose lives go on forever, ones whose opinions are sacred.

***We waffle between our arrogance and our discouragement.***

When we cannot see the resolution of difficulties we face, we forget to call upon the power of God. We cling to calamities and do not release them to the power of God.

***Let us remember to go to Jesus with burdens that leave us aching and wanting.*** ***Jesus remembers our frailty. He knows we are dust.***

Let us pray for the power of God in Christ to enter the aching and wanting parts of our lives and world, bringing new life where we have seen no hope. Jesus remembers our frailty. He knows we are dust.

***Jesus’ love and power can take our frailty and bring new life.***

Jesus invites us to this Sacrament to remember his Love, and to be renewed by the Spirit’s presence, as we share the Bread of Life with all God’s people.

COMMUNION PRAYER

BLESSING AND PARTAKING

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

***Holy One, we give you thanks for the gifts of this Sacrament, strengthening our faith, increasing our love for one another, and granting us courage and peace as we humbly and joyfully serve in Jesus’ name. Amen.***

HYMN ***“Lead Me to Calvary”***  Verses 1 & 4

***King of my life, I crown thee now, thine shall the glory be; lest I forget thy thorn-crowned brow, lead me to Calvary. Lest I forget Gethsemane, lest I forget thine agony,***

***lest I forget thy love for me, lead me to Calvary.***

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***May I be willing, Lord, to bear daily my cross for thee;***

***even thy cup of grief to share, thou hast borne all for me. Lest I forget Gethsemane, lest I forget thine agony,***

***lest I forget thy love for me, lead me to Calvary.***

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Hope of the World*  Copes

Welcome to worship. Made from dust but crafted by God’s creative hand and marked with the cross of Christ, we begin the Lenten season together.

Just a reminder for all who print this bulletin ahead of the service, the Zoom **Ash Wednesday** service is at 7:00 p.m. this Wednesday, February 17. Please use the Meeting ID: **842 0206 5327** and Passcode: **384480.** Also, use this same ID and Passcode the following **Wednesdays of Lent** at noon to Zoom in for a 15 minute devotional service. It will be a simple service of reading with scripture and prayer. Maundy Thursday service will be at 7:00 p.m. on April 1.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:2**

**20**So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **21**For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**6**As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. **2**For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
    and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

**Matthew 6:1-6**

**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.

Clip and Save

Ash Wednesday 7:00 p.m. Zoom

Meeting ID: 842 0206 5327

Passcode: 384480

Lenten Wednesdays Noon Zoom

Beginning February 24

Same ID and Passcode

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Zoom Remains the Regular Zoom ID and Passcode We Have Been Using for Several Months