**St. John United Church of Christ**

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

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| March 2, 2022 | Ash Wednesday (C) |
| Rev. Karla Frost, Pastor | Ritch Alexander, Organist |
| 7:00 p.m. Zoom & In-Person | With Ashes and Communion |
| 2901 Nameoki Road | Granite City, IL 62040 |
| E-stjohnucc2901gc@yahoo.com | (618) 877-6060 |

Web-stjohnuccgranitecity.com

**Currently face masks are RECOMMENDED.**

Large print bulletins are available from the Ushers.

***Bold italic denotes congregation reads or sings.***

\*Denotes all who are able, please stand.

**WE COME TO WORSHIP GOD**

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC, WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

PRELUDE AND CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

*God So Loved the World* Stainer

A STORY FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN1 Gail Gaymer Martin

*Did You Bring the Map?*

George and Kiki Cochran

CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Tonight, we begin a journey, a Lenten journey.

***Along the way we may feel lost.***

We may feel like we’re running on empty.

***We may question which way to turn.***

We may question whether to keep going.

***For tonight we begin a journey,***

Toward Jerusalem,

***Toward an upper room,***

Toward betrayal and denial,

***Toward suffering and a cross.***

This is a journey we may choose to take.

***Or we may choose to go in circles,***

***moving further and further away.***

Let us pray.

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***Navigator of Life, keep us from becoming lost. Guide us in the direction that brings spiritual peace, even when the road is rough. We take this journey alone, and with loved ones and hitchhikers, all seeking to arrive home with you. Show us the way—the way to live now, and the way to live forever. Amen.***

\*HYMN  ***“Near the Cross”*** #479

LITANY OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Jesus says: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.”

***We are here tonight. We do believe. Yet we do not always live our belief.***

Let us confess our sins and return to the Lord.

***Lord of Life, we confess that we are not “holier than thou”, even though we may think so. We need your mercy, for we have sinned against you and one another, and against ourselves. We have sinned in times of hypocrisy, times of arrogance and selfishness, times of doing evil in your sight and the sight of others. We have treasured the things of the earth, rather than the things of heaven. Cleanse our hearts and lives, O Lord, and reward us with your peace. Amen.***

Jesus promises to take us home to himself. He promises to show us the Way home, and in his promise, there is Truth and Life. Therefore, God creates in us a clean heart, and grants in us a new and right spirit. The Spirit of peace is with us now, as we choose to journey toward home, as we choose not to look away.

ANTHEM *I Only Looked Away* Chancel Choir

**THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

IMPOSITION Remember, you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

\*HYMN ***“Lead Me to Calvary”*** #253

**WE HEAR GOD’S WORD**

GOSPEL READINGS John 14:1-6a and Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

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MEDITATION

RESPONSIVE PSALTER READING Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

***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.

***Indeed, I was born guilty,***

***a sinner when my mother conceived me.***

You desire truth in the inward being;

therefore, teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

***Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;***

***wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.***

Let me hear joy and gladness;

let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

***Hide your face from my sins,***

***and blot out all my iniquities.***

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

and put a new and right spirit within me.

***Do not cast me away from your presence,***

***and do not take your holy spirit from me.***

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

and sustain in me a willing spirit.

***Then I will teach transgressors your ways,***

***and sinners will return to you.***

Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation,

and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

***O Lord, open my lips,***

***and my mouth will declare your praise.***

For you have no delight in sacrifice;

if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

***The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;***

***a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.***

\*HYMN ***“Search Me, O God”*** #385

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**THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

STEWARDSHIP INVITATION

OFFERTORY *Be Still, My Soul/Sacred Head, Now Wounded* Prim

\*RESPONSE ***“Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights”***

Vss. 1 & 4 #250

***Throughout these Lenten days and nights***

***we turn to walk the inward way,***

***where, meeting Christ, our guide and light,***

***we live in hope till Easter Day.***

***And though the road is hard and steep,***

***the Spirit ever calls us on***

***through Calvary’s dying, dark and deep,***

***until we see the coming Dawn.***

\*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

***Merciful Lord, we show our commitment to following your way not only through these offerings, but also through our acts of mercy and lives of humble service. We choose to believe, and to respond, for you offer us the way, the truth, and the life, now and forever. Amen.***

INVITATION2 All confessing Christians are invited to partake.

COMMUNION PRAYER2 AND 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.***

BLESSING AND PARTAKING

\*UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

***God of Mercy, we thank you that you cleanse us from our sins and grant us life. We thank you that through this Sacrament our hearts are renewed by the joy of your salvation. Our spirits are ready, O God, ready for the Lenten journey. Keep us moving onward with Jesus, we pray. Amen.***

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\*HYMN ***“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”***  #255

\*MOMENT OF SILENCE IN NEAR DARKNESS

\*BENEDICTION

\*POSTLUDE  *Under His Wing* Sankey

Welcome to Ash Wednesday worship. This is both a time of solemn contemplation and a reminder that Christ assures us of eternal life through the cross.

Thank you to **Kiki Cochran** for serving as liturgist tonight.

The offering tonight will be given to Kindercottage for their caring ministries.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

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— **2**a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountain a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

**12**Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; **13** 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. **14**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? **15**Blow the trumpet in Zion;  sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; **16**gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. **17**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?’”

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**John 14:1-6a**

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. **2**In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? **3**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. **4**And you know the way to the place where I am going.” **5**Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” **6**Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

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 rustconsumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

***“Near the Cross”***

***Jesus, keep me near the cross;***

***There a precious fountain,***

***Free to all, a healing stream,***

***Flows from Calvary’s mountain.***

***In the cross, in the cross,***

***Be my glory ever,***

***Till my raptured soul shall find***

***Rest beyond the river.***

***Near the cross, a trembling soul,***

***Love and mercy found me;***

***There the bright and morning star***

***Sheds its beams around me.***

***In the cross, in the cross,***

***Be my glory ever,***

***Till my raptured soul shall find***

***Rest beyond the river.***

***Near the cross! O Lamb of God,***

***Bring its scenes before me;***

***Help me walk from day to day***

***With its shadow o’er me.***

***In the cross, in the cross,***

***Be my glory ever,***

***Till my raptured soul shall find***

***Rest beyond the river.***

***Near the cross I’ll watch and wait,***

***Hoping, trusting ever,***

***Till I reach the golden strand***

***Just beyond the river.***

***In the cross, in the cross,***

***Be my glory ever,***

***Till my raptured soul shall find***

***Rest beyond the river.***

***“Lead Me to Calvary”***

***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.***

***Show me the tomb where thou wast laid,***

***Tenderly mourned and wept;***

***Angels in robes of light arrayed***

***Guarded thee while thou slept.***

***Lest I forget Gethsemane,***

***Lest I forget thine agony,***

***Lest I forget thy love for me,***

***Lead me to Calvary.***

***Let me, like Mary through the gloom,***

***Come with a gift to thee;***

***Show to me now the empty tomb,***

***Lead me to Calvary.***

***Lest I forget Gethsemane,***

***Lest I forget thine agony,***

***Lest I forget thy love for me,***

***Lead me to Calvary.***

***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.***

***“Search Me, O God”***

***Search me, O God, and know my heart today;***

***Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray.***

***See if there be some wicked way in me;***

***Cleanse me from every sin and set me free.***

***I praise thee, Lord, for cleansing me from sin;***

***Fulfill thy Word and make me pure within.***

***Fill me with fire where once I burned with shame;***

***Grant my desire to magnify thy name.***

***Lord, take my life and make it wholly thine;***

***Fill my poor heart with thy great love divine.***

***Take all my will, my passion, self and pride;***

***I now surrender, Lord – in me abide.***

***“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”***

***Beneath the cross of Jesus***

***I gladly take my stand –***

***The shadow of a mighty Rock***

***Within a weary land,***

***A home within the wilderness,***

***A rest upon the way,***

***From the burning of the noon-tide heat,***

***And the burden of the day.***

***Upon that cross of Jesus***

***My eye at times can see***

***The very dying form of One***

***Who suffered there for me;***

***And from my smitten heart with tears***

***Two wonders I confess***

***The wonders of redeeming love***

***And my unworthiness.***

***I take, O cross, your shadow***

***For my abiding place;***

***I ask no other sunshine than***

***The sunshine of his face,***

***Content to let the world go by,***

***To know no gain nor loss,***

***My sinful self my only shame,***

***My glory all the cross.***