

**First Parish Church, Congregational
United Church of Christ
ASH WEDNESDAY
February 17, 2021
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO THE JOURNEY OF LENT

Minister: The season of Lent has come.

All: Let us recommit ourselves to following the journey of Jesus - the One who came to bring good news to the poor, hope to the struggling, and freedom to all from whatever holds them captive.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, we confess to You and to one another that we have not loved as You love. We have not loved You with all our heart, mind and strength; we have not loved our neighbor as You command; and we have not loved ourselves as ones created in Your image and likeness.

Too often, we have turned away from Your call to love out of pride, hypocrisy, fear, greed and envy. Too often, we have loved the things of the world more than we have loved You and others.

Forgive us Holy One, for the ways we have fallen short of Your hopes and expectations for us. Forgive us for neglecting the needs of our brothers and sisters, and for our indifference to injustice and suffering. Forgive us for neglecting the divine spark You have placed in us. Restore our souls, God, and give us new eyes to see, new hearts to feel, and new spirits to soar.

Amen.

SONG

"You Say"

Daigle, Maybury & Ingram

READING

"Ash Wednesday"

Richard Foster

SILENT REFLECTION**THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES****Psalm 51:10-17****(New Revised Standard Version Translation)**

- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.
- ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- ¹⁶ For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.
- ¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

SILENT REFLECTION**SONG**

"Amazing Grace"

Newton

SILENT REFLECTION

THE GOSPELS

Matthew 6:1-13

(New Revised Standard Version Translation)

¹ "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.

⁷ "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ "Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

- 10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
- 11 Give us this day our daily bread.
- 12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
- 13 And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

REFLECTION

Rev. Mark

GROUP REFLECTION

PRAYER

We thank You, O God, for calling us to follow Jesus. We thank You for loving us so much that You ask us to walk that same path. During these days of Lent, may we rededicate ourselves to our relationship with You and each other, and recommit ourselves to putting Your ways first in our lives.

Amen.

CLOSING SONG

"Fix You"

Martin

BLESSING