



JESUS DOES.
How about you?



PARKWAY
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Wednesday, March 2, 2021

In the middle of a normal week, we pause to observe Ash Wednesday together—individually and as a faith community. We remember that God made us from fragile, blessed dust and breathes through us the breath of life and love. From dust we are created and to God’s good dust we shall return. With dust and oil and glitter (a new recipe!) tonight - or your dirt from a houseplant, chocolate powder, cinnamon or some ashes you created - we claim the mark of God’s cherished, flawed, blessed and beloved creature.

Today we begin our 40-day Lenten journey to discover who we are created to be as God’s beloved—and how we are to approach and treat one another as also beloved.

In daily practices of prayer, study, self-reflection and service we will be very intentional on this Lenten journey. We follow Jesus -- God’s Beloved Child, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh in whom we see God’s image most clearly. So come, let us pray for strength and imagination to follow Jesus wherever he will lead us this Lent. We model ourselves after him and long to be a more faithful, creative and effective expression of him. Our theme this year is:

Jesus Does. How about you?

With all the twists and turns our lives sometimes take away from God and God’s ways, we want to return. As we journey this season, we pay attention to where we have been and to where we are going. We want to know ourselves better and see where we need to be focused on building up our Christian identity.

We welcome the Spirit to lead us, guide us and light the way so that we can be more intentionally the hands, heart and hope of Jesus.

Ash Wednesday

March 2, 2022 | 7:00pm | In-Person and Facebook Live... later on YouTube

Meditation

A garden requires patient labor and attention. Plants do not grow merely to satisfy ambitions or to fulfill good intentions. They thrive because someone expended effort on them. ~Liberty Hyde Bailey

Welcome

Choral Introit *Jesus, Keep Me Near*—Ellen Purchase

Based on Matt. 4:1—11 (sung by the Sanctuary Choir)

Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

Hebrew Scripture Lesson Joel 2, selected verses

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

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 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. 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? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; 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. 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?’”

Centering Please take a breath between each line.

Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know that I am

Be still and know that I

Be still and know that

Be still and know

Be still and

Be still

Be

Amen.

Lenten Candles

We light seven candles tonight as we embark on this Lenten journey. We want the light to illumine our path as we seek to be the words and ways of Jesus.

We commit to being more infused by the Spirit as we travel. Even as we know this is good and important work, we recognize that it isn't easy—and we may come upon the shadow side of humanity and some of our own unique darkness.

We will extinguish one candle each time we gather for worship this season, acknowledging that this can be tough and exhausting work. As we approach the desertion and depletion of Good Friday, we also prepare ourselves for the dawn and love of Easter morning...the light that never goes out.

Prayer at the Candles

Holy One, as we begin this Lenten journey, we see what Jesus does—in order that we might do similar things. We can. We sense his power and we can exercise our own agency and make choices. We feel his empathy and we can bring more love into the world. We see him spend time apart from everything else and we can take time to be step away and be still. We listen to his stories and can weave our stories together with people near and far. We watch him touch people and we can release our reassurance to others. We hear him speak up and we can be bold for ourselves and others. We sense his struggles and we can find our own courage and stamina. We receive his peace and we can become calm amid storms of every kind. Amen.

Response *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me #363, v1*

The musical score is written on four staves in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "I want Je - sus to walk with me: (Walk with me) I want Je - sus to be in me, All a - long this len - ten jour - ney, Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me. (with me)". The melody is simple and repetitive, with a consistent rhythm of quarter and eighth notes.

Unison Invitation to Confession Psalm 51, selected verses

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.

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. 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.

Silent Prayers We suggest more centering and cleansing breaths.

Assurance of Forgiveness based on Romans 8

We have this assurance that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Hymn *Sunday's Palms are Wednesday's Ashes*

Our ashes are made from the palms we waved the previous year during Holy Week.



1. *Sun-day's palms are Wednes-day's ash - es as an -
2. We have failed to love our neigh - bors, their of -
3. We are hast - y to judge oth - ers, blind to



oth - er Lent be - gins; thus we kneel be - fore our
fenc - es to for - give; have not lis - tened to their
proof of hu - man need; and our lack of un - der -

Mak - er in con - tri - tion for our
 trou - bles, nor have cared just how they
 stand - ing dem - on - strates our in - ner

 sins. We have marred bap - tis - mal pledg - es, in re -
 live, we are jeal - ous, proud, im - pa - tient, lov - ing
 greed; we have wast - ed earth's re - sourc - es; want and

 bel - lion gone a - stray; now, re - turn - ing, seek for -
 o - ver - much our things; may the yield - ing of our
 suf - fering we've ig - nored; come and cleanse us, then re -

 give - ness; grant us par - don, God, this day!
 fail - ings be our Len - ten of - fer - ings.
 store us; make new hearts with - in us, Lord!

Children's Message

Blessing & Imposition of Ashes

Claim and Response: You are—and I am—loved with a forever love.

Response *Spirit of the Living God*

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Invitation to Generosity

Mission Moment ^{2nd} Mile Lent/Easter

Heifer Project | Lydia's House | Unleashing Potential | Eden Seminary

Offering Our Gifts to God *Lenten Meditation*—arr. Ron Loree

Based on *Near the Cross* by William H. Doane

*Doxology

Praise God whose many names abound;
 Our Peace, our Rock, Our Holy Ground,
 Our Home, our All, Earth's Majesty,
 Love, Spirit, Light and Mystery. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

Holy One, this is love. This is our offering—a commitment to flow with your generosity. In Jesus you spoke words of comfort, walked with the unclean and unloved, shared wisdom and bread and fish, brought healing into lives and challenged the status quo. This is love and we want to receive and share it. In Jesus you spoke your word and became the Living Word, you walked a sometimes lonesome and painful road, you shared living water, bread of life, and lived for all. This is love. It is a Spirit seed sown in the ground, which germinates, blossoms, and spreads its sweet perfume... and we are a part of it. We are love. Amen.

Gospel Lesson 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 our God in heaven. 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. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and our God who sees in secret will reward you.

“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. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to our God who is in secret; and our God who sees in secret will reward you.

“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. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by our God who is in secret; and our God who sees in secret will reward you.

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

Reflection

Call to Prayer *Come and Find the Quiet Center*, v 1



1. Come and find the qui - et cen - ter in the crowd - ed life we
2. Si - lence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the
3. In the Spir - it let us trav - el, o - pen to each oth - er's

lead, find the room for hope to en - ter, find the
 pace, God it is who speaks and names us, knows our
 pain, let our loves and fears un - rav - el, cel - e -
 frame where we are freed: clear the cha - os and the
 be - ing, touch - es base, mak - ing space with - in our
 brate the space we gain: there's a place for deep - est
 clut - ter, clear our eyes, that we can see all the
 think - ing, lift - ing shades to show the sun, rais - ing
 dream - ing, there's a time for heart to care, in the
 things that real - ly mat - ter, be at peace, and sim - ply be.
 cour - age when we're shrink - ing, find - ing scope for faith be - gun.
 Spir - it's live - ly schem - ing there is al - ways room to spare!

Pastoral Prayer, Prayers of People, Lord's Prayer

Our [Creator/Mother/Father/Holy One] 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.

Benediction

Postlude *Jesus, I Will Ponder Now*—arr. Albert Beck
 Based on the hymn tune by Melchior Volpius, 1570–1615

2nd Mile Lent & Easter 2022

Go the 2nd Mile with us!

We are pleased to announce that Parkway will again support four worthy organizations with its Second Mile Giving for Lent and Easter. We believe this blend of support will help Parkway create a local, national and international impact with its gifts. Please remember that Second Mile Giving is over and beyond the Operational Budget and donations will be divided evenly among the organizations listed below. Please be generous as these organizations need on our gifts in order to be more faithful and effective.

Lydia's House

Lydia's House works in faith to end domestic violence in St Louis by being a place of healing and a voice of hope for abused women and their children. The agency provides safe, confidentially-located furnished apartments for up to two years, assists women in creating and implementing goal plans that will help them live independently, and increases community awareness of domestic violence. For more information, please visit lydiashouse.org

UP—Unleashing Potential (formerly Neighborhood Houses)

For more than 100 years, Neighborhood Houses has loved children in St Louis. Currently, there are three main facets to their mission:

Early Childhood Education—Caroline Mission is a licensed and accredited Early Childhood facility operated by Neighborhood Houses. Our Mission is to provide quality affordable childcare for children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age. Caroline Mission is a “home away from home.”

Girls' Night Out: Neighborhood Houses and Parents as Teachers collaborated together in the design and execution of a program dedicated to supporting and assisting young mothers, ages 13-22. *Girls Night Out* is designed to promote healthy individuals and families.

After School Programs: Neighborhood Houses is the #1 provider of after school programming with the St Louis Public Schools ... fun & creative activities, homework assistance, character education, cultural awareness, health & fitness focus, arts & crafts, supervised recreation, and much more! For more information, please visit neighborhoodhouses.org

Heifer International

Heifer International does so much more than put food in the mouths of hungry people. Heifer helps people to feed themselves. The goal of every Heifer project is sustainability—project partners achieving self-reliance. And year after year, as partner families “pass on the gift” of knowledge and one or more of their animals’ offspring to others in need, they become links in a network of hope, dignity and self-reliance that helps hundreds of others care for themselves. For more information, please visit heifer.org

Eden Seminary

Eden Theological Seminary is a graduate school preparing women and men for ordained Christian ministry. One of the six seminaries of the United Church of Christ, Eden is a community that seeks God's justice and peace in the world. Eden is welcoming, inclusive and ecumenically diverse.

Eden was established in 1850 at Marthasville, Missouri. It was established because a European education was not adequate to prepare pastors for Evangelical churches on the North American frontier. From its beginning, Eden has embodied an ecumenical spirit. Its first graduating class included six Evangelicals as well as a Methodist and a Mennonite.

Eden admitted its first African American student in 1933. In 1965, the late Joseph Cardinal Ritter of the Saint Louis Archdiocese became the first Roman Catholic Cardinal to address a graduating class in a Protestant seminary. Today, students from many different denominations are engaged in theological education here. Eden remains committed to educating faithful and effective leaders for church and society. The seminary counts among its distinguished graduates Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr and Walter Brueggemann.

Eden Theological Seminary is committed to the study of theology in the context of the ecumenical Christian community and the contemporary interfaith world. For more information, please visit eden.edu.

Please be sure to clearly mark your 2nd Mile gifts throughout the season of Lent.