

ASH

Wednesday

February 22, 2023



PARKWAY
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Ash Wednesday

February 22, 2023 at 7:00pm

In the middle of a 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 tonight—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:

Our theme this year is: ***Jesus Met and Known.***

Jesus met a variety of people on his journey - and he knew even more Biblical characters because of being raised in the faith. As we meet these same people and personalities in the scriptures this Lent, they mingle with us and our unique stories. We also meet Jesus and he meets us this season... and we know him and we are known by him. As we live further into our individual and communal Christian identities, the Holy will help us to be more intentional and authentic about our faithfulness and effectiveness.

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.

Meditation *Jesus matters for Christians because he was for us the decisive disclosure of God.* ~Marcus Borg

Prelude *Lenten Peal*—B. K. Luedloff
Hand chimes rung by volunteers from the congregation.

Welcome and Passing the Peace of Christ

Introit *Kyrie*
[Please follow the Cantor's directions]

Kyrie Eleison...Kyrie Eleison
Christe Eleison...Christe Eleison
Kyrie Eleison...Kyrie Eleison

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 God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether God will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind, 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 of the Holy 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 will 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, Jesus met a variety of people on his journey - and he knew even more Biblical characters because of being raised in the faith. As we meet these same people and personalities in the scriptures, they mingle with us and our unique stories. We also meet Jesus and he meets us this season... and we know him and we are known by him. As we live further into our individual and communal Christian identities, help us to be more intentional and authentic about our faithfulness and effectiveness. Amen.

Response *Ubi Caritas* #2179



Live in char - i - ty and stead - fast love,
U - bi ca - ri - tas et a - mor,

live in char - i - ty; God will dwell with you.
u - bi ca - ri - tas De - us i - bi est.

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

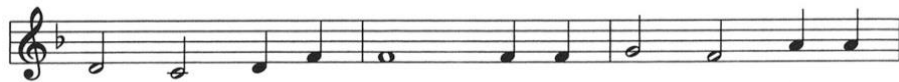
We have this assurance that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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

Our ashes are made from the palms we waved last 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

Children will remain in Worship this evening. The Nursery door is open but it is not staffed. Please feel free to use that space if your child needs a change of environment for a few minutes. The couches, open area and speaker from the sanctuary also make the Gathering Space a good option.

Blessing & Imposition of Ashes

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

Offertory Interlude *Jesus, Keep Me Near*—Ellen Purchase

Based on Matt. 4:1-11

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir.

*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** *As a Fire is Meant for Burning*—Ruth Duck
Holy One, as a fire is meant for burning with a bright and warming flame, so the church is meant for mission, giving glory to Your name.

Not to preach our creeds or customs, but to build a bridge of care, we join hands across the nations, finding neighbors everywhere.

We are learners; we are teachers; we are pilgrims on the way. We are seekers; we are givers; we are vessels made of clay.

By our gentle, loving actions, we would show that Christ is light. In a humble, listening Spirit, we would live to Your delight.

As a green bud in the springtime is the sign of life renewed, so may we be signs of oneness 'mid earth's peoples, many hued.

As a rainbow lights the heavens when a storm is past and gone, may our lives reflect the radiance of Your new and glorious dawn. 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.”

Reflections

Call to Prayer *Come and Find the Quiet Center*



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 the 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 2023

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 110 years, Neighborhood Houses has loved children in St Louis.

Currently, there are four main facets to their mission:

Early Childhood Education: Caroline Mission is a licensed and accredited Early Childhood facility operated by UP. Their 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.”

Youth Development: The approach relies on positive, mutually beneficial relationships between youth and their families, peers, schools, workplaces and communities that allow youth to enhance their knowledge, interests, skills and abilities. Through our coaching and guidance, they are able to build the competencies, skills and abilities needed to have a productive life and contribute to their community.

While our support changes to meet the evolving interests and needs of youth, our efforts have included:

- employment opportunities
- scholarships for participants or their siblings
- safe spaces for meeting
- after school and weekend programs and camps
- mentoring programs
- college visits
- community outreach events
- referral services

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!

Enrichment Camps: UP camps provide school-age girls and boys an opportunity for unleashing their potential through educational and recreational programs. UP camps are held at churches and other locations throughout the St. Louis region.

For more information, please visit upstl.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, Holy Week and Easter.