



*A Service of Prayer and Preparation*

*February 25, 2009*

*Brookline Community Church*

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*\* The Church is totally accessible \**

*Brookline Community Church*

*UCC - UMC*

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 25, 2009

7:30 p.m.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We have left many important pursuits to gather here. In these moments, worship is of first importance.

**People: Together, we begin a season of self-examination. We begin a humble walk with God through Lent.**

Leader: This is a time for building spiritual disciplines. Those disciplined by Christ become disciples.

**People: We seek to follow in the steps of Jesus. We want to walk in the paths where Christ leads.**

INVOCATION – **Send your Holy Spirit on this gathering of seeking people, O God of our salvation. Open our hearts to receive your gifts. Open our minds to think new thoughts. Open our hands in generous sharing. Open our lips to declare your praise. Keep us from pious pretension, that we may approach you with genuine yearning to please you, not to impress others. We hear you calling us: Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation. Here we are, God. We seek your healing touch. Amen.**

\*HYMN # 227 “Rock of Ages”

CALL TO CONFESSION – **Christians are sometimes labeled hypocrites. Do we appear pious only in church? Do we call attention to our good deeds for recognition and reward? How do our private lives and working relationships fit the picture we want others to see? God invites honest self-reflection and struggle toward authentic living.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION – **Help us awesome God, to be honest with ourselves and with you. We want to change our wasteful, destructive ways. We want to be rid of the evil that weighs us down, the guilt that crushes our spirits. Have mercy on us as we remember and confess our sins in these moments of silent struggle. Purge us of all the garbage from our past. Wash us in the flowing streams of your forgiving love. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and fill our lives with a new and right spirit. Sustain our hearts day by day in renewed focus on your steadfast love. Amen.**

A LITANY OF FAITH AND COURAGE

Leader: O God of Abraham and Sarah, you have led your people in the past; lead us now.

\* **Please stand in body or in spirit.**

**People: Grant us the courage of Ruth to leave behind the old and familiar, the courage of Noah to risk laughter and scorn, the hope of Jeremiah to invest in the future, and the unselfishness of Esther to take risks on behalf of others.**

Leader: O God, of Moses and Miriam, you delivered your people and led them through the wilderness, giving them food, protection, and guidance.

**People: In the words of Miriam, we praise you: “I will sing to Yahweh, who has triumphed gloriously!”**

Leader: O God of Deborah and Gideon, you have given us leaders to bring us back when we wander from you, and deliverers to lead us against oppression.

**People: Give us leaders and deliverers, and grant us the wisdom to follow them.**

Leader: From the words of your prophets we have learned justice and mercy.

**People: Help us to say, with Isaiah, “Here am I. Send me.”**

Leader: O God of James and John and Mary Magdalene, you have called us to follow Jesus.

**People: Teach us how to work together in mutual responsibility, side-by-side, neither tagging behind nor shoving to the front.**

Leader: O God of Paul and Priscilla and Aquila, who risked their lives for the sake of spreading your church, fill us with enthusiasm for your church.

**People: Use us in the spreading of the church, in the building up of its parts, in the joining together of its various congregations, and in ministry to the whole world.**

Leader: O God of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself in love for the whole world, teach us so to love.

**People: Grant us the spirit of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve. Amen.**

SCRIPTURES: Joel 2:1-2  
Psalm 51:1-17

MEDITATION

CEREMONY OF ASHES

\* HYMN # 218 “Were you There”

BENEDICTION

Leader: The grace of God will empower you daily. The love of God will transform your outlook.

**People: We anticipate each day with joy. Every moment becomes an exciting opportunity.**

Leader: Your prayers will be answered. You will grow in wisdom and graciousness.

**People: Thank God for mercy and steadfast love. Praise be to Christ throughout this Lenten journey.**