

MASON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Ash Wednesday Service
February 22, 2023 - 7:00 pm

Pastor Rev.
Veronica Walsh Don

Pastor Rev.
Catherine Merrill



This Evening
We Worship Together
with the
Brookline Community Church
in Fellowship Hall
and via zoom

Meditation

“Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty; not because God is mean or fault-finding...but because God wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things still in store.”

N.T. White, Theologian

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

INTRODUCTION and WELCOME

Rev. Veronica Walsh Don

This evening we gather in this place along with Christians across the world, to mark the beginning of the holy season of Lent.

Today is Ash Wednesday.

Here God invites us to repentance, to bring our sins and burdens here, and to ask for healing and forgiveness.

As you sit in your place this evening what have you to bring?

What needs forgiveness in your life?

Where do you need Christ's healing?

We are, at all times, in the presence of God, who is always forgiving, merciful, compassionate and loving.

Take a few moments of recollection.

* OPENING PRAYER

Rev. Catherine Merrill

Let us pray,

Lord, as we begin this season of Lent, may we turn back to you with all our hearts, in prayer, in fasting, and in right intention.

May we share with others that our sins be forgiven and our hearts mended.

Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, and with your Holy Spirit, we offer an honest prayer.

Amen.

* OPENING HYMN 385 *Search Me, O God*

SCRIPTURE READING *Joel 2:12-18* page 741

BLESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

Rev. Catherine Merrill

Rev. Veronica Walsh Don

VWD: My friends in Christ, let us ask God to bless these ashes which we will use as the mark of our repentance.

CM: God, we gather in your presence on this Ash Wednesday to seek your forgiveness and to ask your help as we travel forward into Lent. Have mercy for the times we have failed to love as did Christ. Have mercy when we have refused to forgive. Have mercy when we have not noticed the needs of our sisters and brothers. These ashes are a sign of our repentance. Amen.

INVITATION TO COME FORWARD

Rev. Veronica Walsh Don

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

* CLOSING HYMN 252 *Lord, Who Throughout These 40 Days*

*** BLESSING AND DISMISSAL****Rev. Veronica Walsh Don**

*Loving and compassionate God, through our observance of Lent,
help us to understand the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection.*

Teach us to reflect it in our own way of living.

Go in Peace. Amen.

POSTLUDE**SCRIPTURES****Joel 2:12-18**

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?" '

Then the Lord became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people.

2 Corinthians 5:18-6:2

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

For he says,

'At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.'

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

Hymn 385

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.

Words: Synesius of Cyrene, tr. Allen W. Chatfield

Music: William Damon's Psalms, 1579

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Hymn 252

Lord, Who Through These Forty Days

Lord, who throughout these forty days
For us did fast and pray,
Teach us with you to mourn our sins
And close by you to stay.

As you with Satan did contend,
And did the victory win,
O give us strength in you to fight,
In you to conquer sin.

As you did hunger and did thirst,
So teach us, gracious Lord,
To die to self, and so to live
By your most holy Word.

And through these days of penitence,
And through your Passiontide,
Forevermore, in life and death,
O Lord, with us abide.

Abide with us that through this life
Of doubts and hope and pain,
An Easter of unending joy
We may at last attain!

Words: Claudia F. Hernaman

Music: American melody

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