

Ash Wednesday

AND TO DUST YOU SHALL RETURN



REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE DUST

THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

The Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Amherst, New Hampshire

February 17, 2021

Ash Wednesday

10:00 a.m.

PRELUDE *Psalm Prelude: Expectavi* Fenton Groden
(*Psalm 130:5—“I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.”*)

WORDS OF WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: In the softness of evening,
in the solace of silence we come to you, O God.

Many: **We come for acceptance;
we come for community;
we come for forgiveness and love.**

One: In the serenity of day's end,
in the restfulness of worship, we come to you, O God

Many: **We come to you for respite;
we come to you for healing;
we come to you for forgiveness and love.**

One: In the quiet of the night,
in the security of darkness we come to you, O God.

Many: **We come for peace;
we come for comfort;
we come for forgiveness and love.**

All: **We come, O Lord of Light,
seeking the illumination of your Word.
We come for the path we cannot find;
we come for the life we fear to live.
We come to you to help us rise from the ashes;
for you give us breath and being.**

SETTING THE TABLE

The table is set with bread, juice, water and ashes. Each gift is introduced as it is presented.

THE SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 58:1-12

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

ASH WEDNESDAY REFLECTION

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

Adoration

Florence B. Price

READING

“Blessing the Dust for Ash Wednesday”

Jan Richardson

All those days
you felt like dust,
like dirt,
as if all you had to do
was turn your face
toward the wind
and be scattered
to the four corners

or swept away
by the smallest breath
as insubstantial—

did you not know
what the Holy One
can do with dust?

This is the day
we freely say
we are scorched.

This is the hour
we are marked
by what has made it
through the burning.

This is the moment
we ask for the blessing
that lives within
the ancient ashes,
that makes its home
inside the soil of
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked
not for sorrow.
And let us be marked
not for shame.
Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are

but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made
and the stars that blaze
in our bones
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.

INVITATION and DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

Those who wish to participate are invited to use the ashes that were sent in the mail, or use a pinch of dirt or ash that you have around your home. When applying the ash to yourself or to those present with you, you may choose to mark the forehead or the back of the hand with a cross or a circle, and say the words, "You are a beloved child of God."

HYMN

Just as I Am, Without One Plea

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSIONAL PRAYER (unison)

We bring our burdens and our failings to you, O Christ,
who bears the heavy load for us.

We place upon you our excuses, our shortcomings,
our anger and our desire,
knowing that you can remove this weight from us
and restore us to life.

We confess that we have not loved you fully
and have not loved our neighbor as ourselves.

We confess that we have not fully loved even our selves.

Forgive us and help us to turn towards you.

Hear our prayers of contrition and confession now, in the silence...

SILENT PRAYER

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Giving and forgiving God,
restore what has been broken,
transform what has withered,
find what has been lost,
so we may be the living, loving image of you in creation.
In your precious name we pray. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

One: We come to the table as an Easter people;
tempted to tell only our faith stories of triumph and victory,
tempted to move directly to the party with flowers and balloons.

Many: We come to the table, there is room for us here.

One: We come to the table scarred from the world;
bringing some vague awareness that all is not well,
bringing some distant memory that the costly cross looms in the distance.

Many: We come to the table, there is room for us here.

One: We come to the table with a sense of unease;
knowing that we too have betrayed or denied out of fear,
knowing that we too have been reluctant to claim Jesus as our own.

Many: We come to the table, there is room for us here.

One: We come to this table with hope.
knowing that all are welcome here,
knowing that no one is turned away from God's abundant grace.

Many: We come to the table, to remember and to be renewed.

TABLE PRAYER

SHARING OF COMMUNION

You are invited to take a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, and then eat the bread.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

Our Father, 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 BLESSING

POSTLUDE

*Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ
(I Cry to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ)*

Johann Pachelbel

*Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service
obtained from One License with license #A-731944.*

Today's liturgy has been adapted from the following sources:

*Lisa Frenz, Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, Jessica Gazzola,
K. HawkerSelf, and Jan Richardson.*

*Our bulletin cover was created by Laura R. Norton,
www.LettersAloft.com.*



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AMHERST
A Welcoming, Open and Affirming Congregation
of the United Church of Christ



**“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,
you are welcome here.”**

We, the members of the Congregational Church of Amherst, New Hampshire, United Church of Christ, believe God’s Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ call us to love all our neighbors as we would want to be loved. We are called to be as one body, seeking to walk together in the full life and ministry of our church.

We welcome each individual as a child of God. As covenant members of Christ’s church, we celebrate God’s love for people of all races and ethnic backgrounds, all mental and physical abilities, all socioeconomic backgrounds, all sexual orientations, all gender identities and gender expressions, and all of the other diverse attributes woven into the fabric of humankind.

With God’s grace, we invite all to share in the life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship and sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of our church.

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us. Our membership is open to all those who choose to walk with us in our witness. Please speak with any of our deacons or pastors should you have any questions regarding our church or our membership.

Here’s how to reach us: by telephone 673-3231, or by email info@ccamherst.org. If we are unavailable by phone, please feel free to leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can. Visit our church’s website at www.ccamherst.org, and follow us on Facebook at Facebook.com/ccamherst.

Current Reopening Information: Are you wondering where things stand? Through the members section on our website, we have a page dedicated to communicating with our church family on both current policies and procedures for use of the building during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the progress of our ad hoc Reopening Team. Documents will be posted as they are made available. If you have any questions or concerns about any of this information, please reach out to any member of the team: Pastor Maureen Frescott, Jessica Greer, Pastor Kate Kennedy, Keith Lammers, Susan Manchester, Kathy Skoglund, Paul Spiess, Kate Thompson, Doug Topliffe, Sue Werst, Tom Werst.

Grounded in God’s Love—Serving Neighbors Near and Far—Welcoming to All

Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Members and Friends of The Congregational Church

Rev. Maureen R. Frescott

Rev. Katherine R. Kennedy

Sara L. Phelps

Michael Havay

Ministers to the World

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Director of Music

Organist/Accompanist