

FOUNDED 1716
North Haven
Congregational Church
United Church of Christ



North Haven, Connecticut
An Open & Affirming Congregation

**NORTH HAVEN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

All Day

Ash Wednesday

GREETING

PRELUDE: *If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee*

Setting by Max Reger

THE CALL TO WORSHIP: (from Joel 2:1, 12-17)

Leader: Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people.

PEOPLE: We come in true repentance, young and old, male and female, joyful and sorrow-filled.

Leader: Return to God with all your hearts.

PEOPLE: We turn to God, repenting the wrong we have done and the good we have left undone.

Leader: Rend your hearts and not your garments.

ALL: God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

THE CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER: *~unison*

Lord, all the plans I tried are burned to ash
and all the sighs I sighed are burned to ash
and all the tears I cried are burned to ash
and all the lies I lied are burned to ash;
the finished bon-fire of my old disgrace.

And then You dig them over in Your soil
and overturn my will for forty days
and some new page turns over in my heart
and all my sin turns over in my mind
and all my dug-in demons overturn
and You dig over all my sad, old soil
while forty ash-dry days and nights go by
until I have a new earth to begin. ^^ Amen.

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.

Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.

You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

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

HERE ENDS THE READING. THANKS BE TO GOD.

SECOND READING: Isaiah 58:6-9a

p. 677

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 the LORD will say, Here I am.

HERE ENDS THE READING. THANKS BE TO GOD.

TIME FOR REFLECTION

HYMN: "Dust and Ashes Touch our Face"

V105

THE BLESSING OF THE ASHES

God our Creator,

You have formed us out of the dust of the earth.

May these ashes be to us

a sign of our mortality and penitence,

so that we may remember

that only by your gracious gift

are we given everlasting life,

through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

~silence

Leader: Merciful and generous God, we come before you, conscious of our sins. We are ashamed and sorry for the wrong we have done and the good we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves; we have not even loved ourselves very well.

People: God of mercy, forgive us.

Leader: For the times when we are too rushed to care, when we are too tired to bother, when we don't really listen, when we act from motives other than love,

People: God of mercy, forgive us.

Leader: For our incapacity to feel the sufferings of others, and our tendency to live comfortably with injustice,

People: God of mercy, forgive us.

Leader: For our failings in community, our lack of understanding,

People: God of mercy, forgive us.

Leader: For our lack of forgiveness, openness, sensitivity,

People: God of mercy, forgive us.

Leader: For the self-righteousness that denies guilt, and the self-interest that strangles compassion,

People: God of mercy, forgive us.

Leader: Now, merciful God, we come to you in silence: you already know the wrong that weights us down, the guilt we cannot shake. We ask you to take them from us now and set us free to begin a new life.

People: God of mercy, forgive us.

**ALL: For everything in us that may hide your light,
Holy One, Light of life, God of mercy, forgive us. ****

~silence

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

All: Thanks be to God! Amen. **

*THE BENEDICTION

*Those who are able, please stand.

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MISSION

Our church's mission is to bind ourselves with Jesus Christ in:

- Worship together;
- Nurture of Christian discipleship; and
- Compassionate service to our community and beyond.

VISION

We are a hub for the larger community as a church of action:

- Conducting regular, robust worship in a responsible and relevant way in an ever changing and challenging world;
- Welcoming all people from different and diverse backgrounds to become a community of disciples together; and
- Involved in purposeful action and activities through the structure of self-directed Mission Teams.

VALUES

We:

- Pray together, encourage each other, and trust one another;
- Take personal responsibility for fellowship and our community; and
- Celebrate with honored traditions.

HYMN: "Dust and Ashes Touch our Face"

V105

Optional Unison

1 Dust and ash - es touch our face,
 2 Dust and ash - es soil our hands—
 3 Dust and ash - es choke our tongue

mark our fail - ure and our fall - ing. Ho - ly Spir - it, come,
 greed of mark - et, pride of na - tion. Ho - ly Spir - it, come,
 in the waste - land of de - pres - sion. Ho - ly Spir - it, come,

walk with us to - mor - row, take us as dis - ci - ples,
 walk with us to - mor - row, as we pray and strug - gle
 walk with us to - mor - row, through all gloom and griev - ing

washed and wak - ened by your call - ing.
 through the mesh - es of op - pres - sion.
 to the paths of res - ur - rec - tion.

Refrain

Take us by the hand and lead us, lead us through the

de - sert sands, bring us liv - ing wa - ter,

Ho - ly Spir - it, come.