

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 18, 2026**

**7:00pm**

**Ash Wednesday**

**GREETING**

**PRELUDE:** *Downstream*

Eugenie Rocherolle

**OPENING HYMN:** "Come and Find the Quiet Centre"

V374

**\*THE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

**Leader:** Friends and neighbors, in the middle of our busy week, we pause to observe Ash Wednesday together in community.

**People:** **We come to remember that God made us from fragile, blessed dust and breathes through us the breath of life and love.**

**Leader:** From dust we are created in God's image and to God's good dust we shall return.

**People:** **With dust and oil we claim the mark of God's beloved creature.**

**Leader:** Today we begin our 40-day Lenten journey to discover who we are created to be: God's beloved.

**People:** **In daily practices of prayer and service we will embark upon this Lenten journey.**

**Leader:** 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.

**All:** **So come, let us pray for strength and imagination to follow Jesus wherever he will lead us this Lent.**

*~silence is kept*

## Gift of Music: "Where Your Treasure Is"

Luke 12:22-34

Music: Marty Haugen b. 1950

Chancel Choir

Michelle Martin, flute

Where your treas - ure is, there your  
heart shall be. All that you pos - sess will nev - er set you  
free. Seek the things that last; come and  
learn from me. Where your  
treas - ure is, your heart shall be.

The musical score is written on five staves in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and lyrical, with some changes in time signature (2/4 and 3/4) for emphasis. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

Copyright© 2000 by GIA Publications, Inc. • All Rights Reserved

## Invitation to Lenten Disciplines

Rev. Cindy

Beloved in Christ, at the Christian Passover, we celebrate our deliverance from sin and death through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lent is the season of preparation for this great celebration, the means by which we renew our life in the Pashal mystery. We begin our Lenten journey by acknowledging our need for repentance, for in penitence, we name those things which damage us and others and we open ourselves to the One whose love knows no boundaries and whose mercy is demonstrated to us in the life of Jesus Christ.

By taking an honest look at our lives, and repenting of our sins; by praying quietly but with full hearts; by letting go of those things that harm us and by taking on works of love for others; by reading and feasting on God's Word, we observe a holy Lent, and prepare ourselves for the passion of Holy Week and the joy of Easter. Let us prepare ourselves to come to our God.

## CALL TO RECONCILIATION

God begs us to turn from those words, those acts, those obstacles which keep us from being God's people. As we begin our Lenten journey, I invite you to join me, with words and in silence, as we bring our brokenness to God who desires to make us whole. ##

## UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

**Too long have we traveled our own ways, Holy One, too long have we sought to satisfy our hidden desires. We have trusted the falsehoods of the world and relied on that power which would consume our souls. We have sought healing from impostors and rejected the One who was broken for our wholeness.**

**Have mercy on us, God whose love overflows our deepest hopes. Let our hearts be a sanctuary for your Spirit; let our lives abound in service to others; let our spirits reflect the One we call our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. ##**

*~silence is kept*

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God lets go of the punishment we deserve and gives us mercy in its place. Willing, God puts a new spirit into us, the spirit of hope and joy.

**All: We will sing to the One who has delivered us from our sins. We will praise God with cleansed hearts. Thank be to God Amen. Thanks be to God! Amen. \*\***

**Hymn:** *“Change My Heart O God”*

Insert

**FIRST READING:** Psalm 51:1-4, 6, 10-17

p. 512

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. <sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. <sup>11</sup>Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. <sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. <sup>13</sup>Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

<sup>14</sup>Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. <sup>15</sup>O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. <sup>16</sup>For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. <sup>17</sup>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:** Luke 15: 11b-23

p. 677

“There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them.

<sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup>When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’”

<sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’

**HERE ENDS THE READING. THANKS BE TO GOD.**

**MEDITATION:** “Coming to Ourselves”

**Rev. Cindy**

**THE BLESSING AND RECEIVING OF ASHES**

Our ancestors in faith used ashes as a sign of our repentance, a symbol of the uncertainty and fragility of human life.

Like them,

we have tasted the ashes of hopelessness;  
we have walked through the ashes of our loss and pain;  
we have stood knee-deep in the ashes of our brokenness.

God of our lives, out of the dust of creation you have formed us and given us life. May these ashes be not only a sign of our repentance and death, but reminders that by your gift of grace in Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, we are granted life forever with you. Amen.

*~ Silence is kept. You may come forward for anointing with ashes when you are ready. Please indicate whether you prefer to receive them on your forehead or hand.*



## **\*THE BENEDICTION**

*As you begin your Lenten Journey you are invited to leave in silence reflecting upon the hidden places of your life and the needs of a weary world.*

\*Those who are able, please stand.

## Reprinted by permission of the publisher from “*Playing Hopscotch in Heaven*” Bearers of Hope and Wonder, 2013.

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License with license #A-719615.

F (Gm F) Dm Bb F

1 Come and find the qui - et cen - tre in the crowd - ed life we lead,  
 2 Si - lence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,  
 3 In the Spir - it let us trav - el, o - pen to each oth - er's pain,

F (Gm F) Dm Bb F

find the room for hope to en - ter, find the frame where we are freed:  
 God it is who speaks and names us, knows our be - ing, face to face,  
 let our loves and fears un - rav - el, cel - e - brate the space we gain:

F C Dm Am F Bb

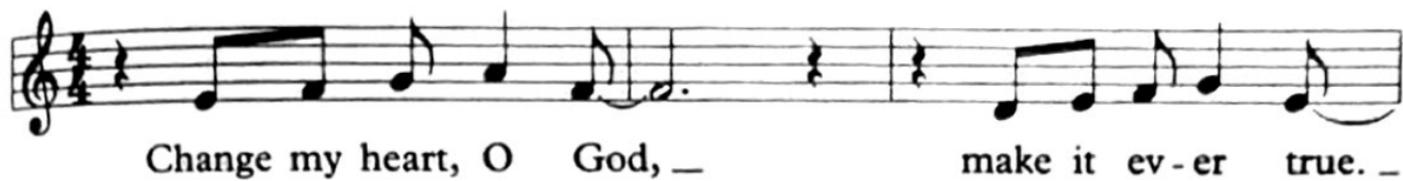
clear the cha - os and the clut - ter, clear our eyes, that we can see  
 mak - ing space with - in our think - ing, lift - ing shades to show the sun,  
 there's a place for deep - est dream - ing, there's a time for heart to care,

C Dm Bb F Gm Am Bb F

all the things that real - ly mat - ter, be at peace, and sim - ply be.  
 rais - ing cour - age when we're shrink - ing, find - ing scope for faith be - gun.  
 in the Spir - it's live - ly schem - ing there is al - ways room to spare!

Hymn: "Change My Heart O God"

Insert



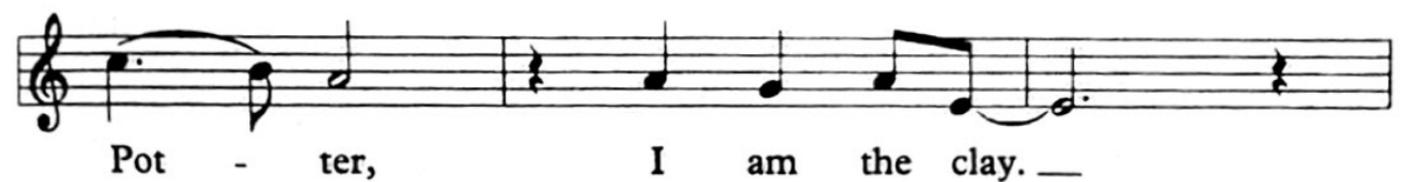
Change my heart, O God, \_ make it ev-er true. \_



\_ Change my heart, O God, \_



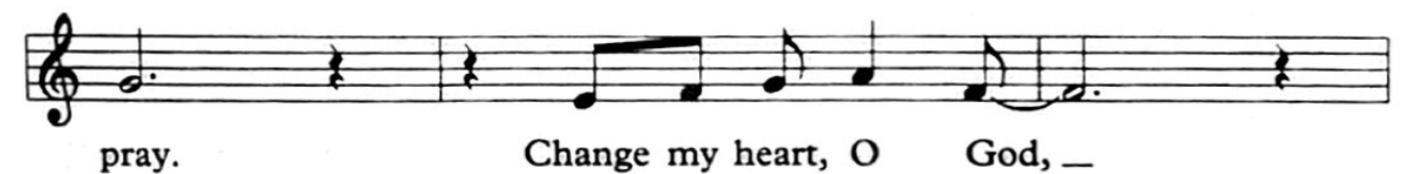
may I be like you. \_ You are the



Pot - ter, I am the clay. \_



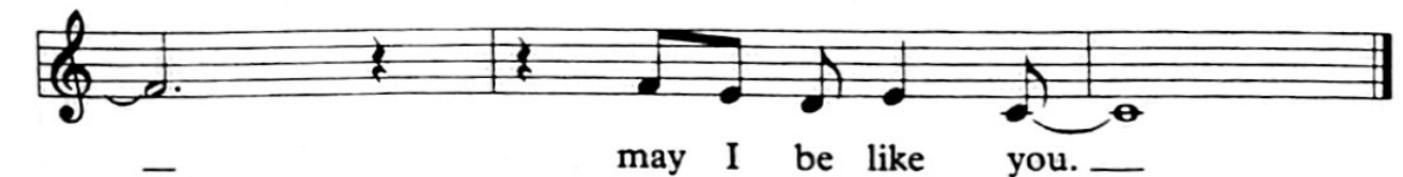
Mold me and make me, this is what I



pray. Change my heart, O God, \_



make it ev-er true. \_ Change my heart, O God, \_



\_ may I be like you. \_

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.

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The first system contains the lyrics 'Take us by the hand and lead us, lead us through the'. The second system contains 'de - sert sands, bring us liv - ing wa - ter,'. The third system contains 'Ho - ly Spir - it, come.' and ends with a double bar line. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand.

**Church Staff:** All the Members, Ministers to the World  
The Reverend Cindy Stasko, Bridge Pastor  
Karlee Etter, Ministry Coordinator for Children  
Jeffrey Hutchins, Director of Music  
Heather Meachen, Organist  
Julie Schweickert, Office Manager  
Dave Nelson, Sexton

## **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.

