

A graphic for Ash Wednesday. The background is a brown, textured surface, possibly wood or parchment. On the left, there are several palm fronds in shades of tan and brown. In the center, there is a dark, circular bowl filled with ash. A purple brushstroke is visible behind the bowl. The text "Ash" is written in a large, dark, hand-drawn font, and "Wednesday" is written below it in a smaller, white, cursive font. A quote and a Bible verse are written in white text on the bowl.

Ash

Wednesday

"Return to me with all your heart."
Joel 2:12

Samuel United Church of Christ
Ash Wednesday Service of Worship
7:00 pm March 2, 2022

Gathering Music

You are invited to gather quietly in reflection and prayerful preparation. Childcare is available in the nursery (the yellow room). The children in childcare will join us at the end of the service for the imposition of ashes and communion. Know that children are also welcomed in worship for the whole service. It will be a shorter service, approximately 45 minutes.

Opening Sentences

A Gathering Prayer

(Adapted from Seasons of the Spirit)

One: Lent begins here, O God, with one foot planted in the present and the other inching into the promise of tomorrow.

All: Lent begins here, O God, in this place where we remember...

One: That when you created us and all of creation you said, "It is good."

All: Lent begins in our remembering that we are yours.

One: It begins in wondering and quiet contemplation. Letting your love and grace surround us and soak deep into our souls.

All: It begins with hearts open to transformation.

One: Lent, like life, is centered in hope.

Hymn:

"Be Now My Vision"

#451 NCH *(black)*

A Time of Prayer for Reflection and Transformation

(Adapted from Worship Design Studio)

*The Passing of the Peace Of Christ

One: The Peace of Christ be with you!

All: And also with you!

One: Let us greet one another with a sign of peace.

*The Response "Ubi Caritas" (Taizé) led by Deni Boullion

The musical score is written in 2/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature of 2/4. The vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (bass clef) are shown. The lyrics are: "U - bi ca - ri - tas et a - - mor, / Live in char - i - ty and stead - fast love,". The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "u - bi ca - ri - tas De - us i - bi est. / live in char - i - ty; God will dwell with you." The score includes various musical notations such as chords (F, C, Dm, Bb, D, G, C, Gm, C, F), rests, and triplets (marked with a '3').

A Story for the Ages – *Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21*

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Response *“Doxology” NCH #778 (black hymnal)*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God for all that love has done;

Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.

Message – *Pastor Jeff*

The Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion

Anyone who seeks the presence of Christ and the community of God’s people is welcome to share in Communion at the Lord’s Table. We welcome children to share in this sacred meal, and recognize this as a decision of each family.

Tonight while, Ethan plays “Amazing Grace” those who wish to receive the mark of ashes on their foreheads are invited to come up. After you have received the ashes, take a communion cup from the table. The sealed cups contain gluten free bread and juice. Please leave space between each other as we continue to practice Covid safety protocols.

For those who are comfortable standing, we invite you to stand with your communion cups around the outside aisles of the sanctuary, again giving good distance between families. We will share in communion together once everyone who wants ashes has received them. If you wish not to stand, take a seat in a pew near the outside aisle. If you do not wish to receive ashes, but would like to join in communion, come on up at anytime and grab a communion cup.

Special Music

*“Amazing Grace”
performed by Ethan Edwards*

Challenge and Blessing

ANNOUNCEMENTS

St Pat’s Day Virtual Auction: NOW OPEN!!!

Check out the online auction to benefit Habitat for Humanity by searching for “bidding owl Samuel ucc” in your favorite search engine to see what’s on offer.

Children Youth and Family Outreach Minister Search Committee Forming.

In light of Melissa Harlow’s move to Chicago this Spring, we are forming a search committee to work on a job description, seek and evaluate candidates, and make recommendations to the Consistory to fill this role on our Samuel Team. If you are interested, or would like to nominate someone else that may be interested in

serving on this search committee, please contact Pastor Jeff or Tim Poor.

Lent 2022: Good Enough

We live in a culture that wants to define the “good life” as continuous upward mobility – climbing ladders of educational achievement, financial prosperity, work success. Even our social life can become one where we compare ourselves to others. Who has the most fabulous experience to post on Facebook? Where did you dine or vacation this week? Who was invited to “the” party? And who wasn’t? Perhaps we even gravitate toward spiritual ladders. If I read this, do this, learn this, or pray this way – then I am going to be okay.

But life happens. Right? Most times we are not moving upward, but trying to repair the rung we’ve just slipped from. So what if we stopped climbing and started fertilizing, watering, and blooming right where we find ourselves? This Lenten Season we are using a resource from the Worship Design Studios to focus our attention on how we can affirm a faith that is blessed, regardless of where we find ourselves on the ladders the world wants us to climb. We will put away the lure of perfectionism and learn to lean into embracing the persons, the people, the community of faith as God has created us.

Three Ancient Contexts of the New Testament: A Lenten Series

March 16, 23, and 30th from 7-8:15pm on Zoom

This three-part Lenten series will explore the ancient religious, philosophical, and social contexts of the writing of the New Testament by discussing its Jewish contexts, Hellenistic/Greek contexts, and its Roman imperial contexts. Come learn, share, and ask anything you've ever wondered about the New Testament and the Bible!

Rev. Dr. Ron Serino is currently the Director of Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Memphis and holds a PhD in Biblical Interpretation from Brite Divinity School (Texas Christian University), a M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary (NYC), and a B.A. from Emory University. His research uses critical race theory (critical whiteness studies) to explore the role of biblical interpretation in constructing race and sanctifying racial whiteness in early modern Britain and its American colonies. He previously worked with people experiencing homelessness in Maryland and with First Congregational UCC, St. Louis.