



February 17, 2021
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Pastor

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Lent Meditation

Lent is a summons to stop – a “HALT!” -, to focus on what is essential, to fast from the unnecessary things that distract us. It is a wake-up call for the soul.

- Pope Francis

**Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ
Joint Virtual Service (Recorded at Grace)
Ash Wednesday**

February 17, 2021

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

Call to Worship

Joel 2, 2 Cor 5

A trumpet sounds from afar.

Listen, God is calling.

What does the Lord say to us?

Now is the time. Today is the day.

Now is the time to return to God.

Today is the day of our salvation.

Our sins cover us like mist upon the mountains.

But you, Lord, have shown us your forgiveness.

Praise our God of grace and constant compassion!

Thanks be to our Lord!

Ash Wednesday Meditation

** Opening Hymn*

“The Old Rugged Cross”

Mt Hope VH #104

Greenfield CH #327

Grace VH #104

Opening Prayer

Our hearts are laid bare before you, Lord. You see us as no one else does. You see past the impostor’s masks we wear. O God, we come to worship you, not with empty words and hollow acts of piety, but with lonely, aching spirits. We long for the days of joy and gladness we have known with you. Fold back the darkness that surrounds us. Show us your mercy. Cover us with your grace. We return our whole hearts to you this day, as we pray humbly together in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Ash Wednesday Call to Repentance

Psalm 51

Lord, you abound in grace and mercy.

Wash away our guilt and cleanse us from our sins.

There is no way to hide what we have done.

Our misdeeds constantly confront us.

We deserve your judgement.

But we plead for your forgiveness.

You alone can change us and transform us.

You alone can restore our joy.

Create a pure heart within us, Lord.

Renew us, revive us, and uphold us.

Open our mouths, that we might proclaim your praises.

Give voice to your songs of deliverance. Amen.

** Confessional Hymn*

“Just As I Am”

Mt Hope VH #422

Greenfield CH #488

Grace VH #422

Prayer Of Repentance

Based on Psalm 51

**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion blot out my
transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me
from my sin.**

**For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before
me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is
evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and
justified when you judge.**

Silent Reflection

**Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I
will be whiter than snow. Create in me a pure heart, O
God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast
me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a
willing spirit, to sustain me. Amen.**

Ash Wednesday Prayer

Ashes are a fitting symbol for this day, Lord. Ashes call to mind Endings ... the end of unclear thinking, insecure faith, wavering commitment and, finally, the end of the struggle between death and life. Time passes. Erosion and rust methodically and silently accomplish their work. Treasures and trophies tarnish. Things which we thought were so important become transparent. Everything returns to dust. Yes, ashes are a fitting symbol for this day, Lord.

Lord God, by your grace, help us to see that endings make possible New Beginnings. As we encounter ashes along the way of life, call to mind our need to return to you, the source of new beginnings. Through your forgiving love, restore us to wholeness and empower us to serve you diligently. Amen.

Imposition of the Ashes

Ashes are a sign of repentance and humility. They remind us of our total dependence on God. Before we approach to receive the sign of the cross with ashes, let us reflect on the meaning of this action:

Do you accept responsibility for your personal sins?

“I do.”

Do you accept responsibility for that evil in the world which your apathy and indifference have allowed?

“Yes”

Do you desire to return to the Lord with your whole heart, and to seek his forgiveness and strength?

“I do.”

Do you believe in the mercy of God, which is constant and more vast than all the evil in the world?

"Yes, I do believe."

Take now, then, these ashes, and return to the Lord with your whole heart.

All may receive “ashes”.

"Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Acceptance & Absolution

O God, our sins have turned that which is living into dust and ashes. Accept the ashes of our heartfelt repentance and breathe new life into our animated human dust, that we might stand eternally in your most holy presence. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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.

* *Closing Hymn* *"Guide Me, O thou Great Jehovah"*

Mt Hope VH #273

Greenfield CH #682

Grace VH #273

* *Benediction*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Wonderfully protected by benevolent powers;

Wonderfully protected by benevolent powers

Comforted, we await what may come

Comforted, we await what may come

For God is with us in the evening, in the morning

For God is with us in the evening, in the morning

All - And most certainly, in every new day.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*