

# Trinity United Church of Christ



## Ash Wednesday Service

March 5, 2025

[www.trinityuccwestville.org](http://www.trinityuccwestville.org)

### Some thoughts to help center you before worship

None of us is excused from the procession.  
The smudgy mark does not adhere differently to man or woman,  
wealthy or destitute, educated or ignorant, compassionate or cruel.  
It labels us as one of the species, one of the mortals,  
who like everything else in this created universe,  
will lose its present form. We will die.  
This is a certainty we share with each other....  
Wendy M. Wright, The Rising

### The Community Gathers to Worship God

\*--Please stand as you are able.

#### Words of Welcome

#### Opening Prayer

One: Let us pray.

Many: Merciful God, we come to you now, realizing that we are not how you want us to be.

Help us to let go of our past, that we may turn toward you and live again the life of faith. Help us call out our fear and hatred, our anger and self-pity. Lift the burden they place on our shoulders.

Help us set aside our guilt and enter a season of healing. Help us become simple people, that we may see you plainly. As we wear the mark of ashes, rekindle the sign of hope within our eyes. Let us draw near to you now. Amen.

## Call to Worship

## United Church of Christ Worship Ways

One: Come, you who are toiling, you who are worn down;

**Many: Liberating God, hear our cries for mercy!**

One: Come, you who are lost, you who are hopeless;

**Many: Redeeming Christ, turn us to your light!**

One: Come, you who are angry, you who are hurting;

**Many: Cleansing Spirit, enter in to our hearts!**

## A Time For Meditation and Reflection

### Prayer for Illumination

One: Let us pray

**Many: God our helper, by your Holy Spirit open our minds, that as the scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may be led into your truth and be taught your will, for the sake of Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### Scripture Reading 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 NIV

6 As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. 2 For he says,

"In the time of my favor I heard you,  
and in the day of salvation I helped you."<sup>[a]</sup>

I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

3 We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. 4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; 5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; 6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; 8 through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; 9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; 10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

a. 2 Corinthians 6:2 Isaiah 49:8

## A Time for Reflection

### Invitation to the Observance of the Lenten Discipline

One: Friends in Christ, the season of Lent is a time to prepare ourselves to celebrate the redemption won for us through the sacrificial mystery of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marks the atonement for all our sins and all our shortcomings in this community of faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, forgiving and forgetting, by works of love, and by reading and meditating on the Word of God.

Let us bow before God, our Creator and Redeemer, and confess our sin.

## Psalm of Repentance

## Psalm 51:1-17

One: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

**Many: Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.**

One: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

**Many: Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.**

One: And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgment.

**Many: Indeed, I have strayed from Your path since my birth, yet still seek you out**

One: For behold, you look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

**Many: Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.**

One: Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice.

**Many: Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.**

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

**Many: Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me.**

One: Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

**Many: I shall teach your ways to the wicked, and sinners shall return to you.**

One: Deliver me from death, O God, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

**Many: Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

One: Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.

**Many: The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

## Prayer of Penitence

## Adapted from Philip Freier

One: Just as new growth surely follows the fire so new things await us as we make this journey to repentance. Because we have covered ourselves with pride and arrogance:

**Many: Cleanse us and set us free.**

One: Since we have been content with the empty and the superficial:

**Many: Fill us from the depths of love.**

One: When we become trapped in old patterns and struggles:

**Many: Lift our eyes in hope.**

One: Even though we are broken and far short of perfection:

**Many: Form us for loving service.**

One: After our best efforts have met with rejection and discouragement:

**Many: Encourage us still to trust.**

One: So we bring before God all that is in our life, knowing that we can hold nothing back from the fire of love which consumes even those faults which we dearly cherish and trusting that God will surely fulfill the promise of newness within our life.

**Many: Amen.**

## **Imposition of Ashes**

One: Let us Pray. Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and penitence, and a reminder that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Many: Amen.**

### **\*Imposition of the Ashes**

Please pause, and take a few moments for prayer, asking God to show you what you need to forgive and for what you need to be forgiven this Lent, what you need to give up and what you need to take on in your life.

As the Pastor signs your forehead with the ashes,  
they will say these or similar words:  
“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

When everyone who wishes to receive ashes has done so,  
we will continue in prayer.

One: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

**Many: That we may show forth your glory in the world.**

One: By the cross and passion of our Savior,

**Many: Bring us with all your saints to the joy of Christ’s resurrection. Amen.**

### **\*Hymn of Parting                      Precious Lord Take My Hand**

**1. Precious Lord, take my hand  
Lead me on, let me stand  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn  
Through the storm, through the night  
Lead me on to the light  
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home**

**2. When my way grows drear  
Precious Lord linger near  
When my life is almost gone  
Hear my cry, hear my call  
Hold my hand lest I fall  
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home**

**3. When the darkness appears  
And the night draws near  
And the day is past and gone  
At the river I stand  
Guide my feet, hold my hand  
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home**

**Blessing and Charge**

**based on Isaiah 58:1-12**

One: As you continue on your Lenten journey put no obstacle in anyone's way;  
Join together to accept God's grace; and be reconciled to God.  
Loose the bonds of injustice, break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free.  
Work to repair the breaches, restore the streets, and let your light rise in the shadows of these Forty Days.  
May the God of peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—free  
from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Many: Thanks be to God. Amen!**

*Thank you for worshipping with us today!  
You are more than welcome to join us this Sunday at 10 am.  
Remember, no matter who you are,  
or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here at Trinity UCC*

