



Pilgrim Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Ash Wednesday – February 22, 2023



**Welcome to Pilgrim Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
A Welcoming, Open and Affirming Congregation**

Mission Statement

*A welcoming home to all
spiritual seekers
Making a difference in our world,
By fusing our Christian faith with
everyday life and
Serving God by serving others.*

Statement of Welcome

*We honor the Biblical call to love one another as God
first loved us. We welcome into the full life and
ministry of the church all people of any race,
nationality, religious background, educational
background, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation,
marital status, economic status, and physical, mental,
and emotional abilities.*

Children at Pilgrim

Children are an important part of our worshipping community. We try to make them feel at home! All are welcome. Professional childcare for infants and toddlers is available in Pilgrim Hall from 10:15 to the end of the service.

Visual and Hearing Aids

Hearing devices may be picked up from the table in the narthex.

Large Print bulletins and
Sermons texts are available.

Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC
Ash Wednesday - February 22, 2023
Daytime Prayers

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The Lord God formed humans from the dust of the ground.

All: God breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, and we became living beings.

One: Made from the dust, but filled with the Spirit, we gather for worship and community.

All: And if we do not worship, the dust itself will rise up in praise.

One: In this moment we are living and conscious, proclaiming God's goodness to all creation.

All: And when we return to dust and bones, our stories will testify to love and justice.

One: So, breathe in the Holy Spirit, knowing you are alive for a moment in time.

All: We breathe and know these things to be true. Let us worship the Life-Giver together. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Giver of life and comfort in death, you are the source of every mineral and every molecule forming our bodies.

You are the source of every spark and sugar energizing our personalities.

And you are the source of the divine breath that brought us to life in the first place.

Today, we gather to remember our humanity, our brevity, our limited human potential.

Though our dreams and egos are grand, though your unique love for each of us is immense, our lives are also a speck on the beach, a chuckle in time, a comma in your novel.

We gather on Ash Wednesday to remember:

We are dust, and to dust, we shall return.

May the truth of our humanity and the power of your infinite love bring us closer to a heavenly perspective. Amen.

GATHERING REFLECTIONS

SCRIPTURES:

Isaiah 58:1-12

Ps. 51:1-4, 10-17

PRAYER

Spirit of Christ, we approach this Lenten season in various states of exhaustion, imbalance, self-absorption, and distraction.

So, we focus our hearts and intentions upon something new and different: rest and reflection.

We are a people of many words written, texted, read, shouted, tweeted, posted, and published.

Today, we quiet our words so you may be heard more clearly.

We are people who purchase products needed, unneeded,
wasteful, luxurious, flimsy, recyclable, and never used.

Today, we turn from consumption so our treasure may be found with you.

We live imbalanced lives between work and rest,
family and friends, pleasure and discipline,
faith and folly, sacrifice and self-care.

Today, we stop, examine, reassess, and repent.

We turn from the imbalance into quiet obedience.

Despite your generosity and abundance,
we deprive ourselves of hope, peace, joy, and love.

We subsist on brief moments with you and with others —
on prolonged hours of labor and media.

Although the Season of Lent calls us to fasting,
we know there is no shortage, no limit, no scarcity
to your gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love.

We receive them today, just as we receive a call to confession and repentance.

As we make space in the noise to hear you more clearly,
to see you more vibrantly, and to serve you more adoringly,
you are faithful to meet us here in that space.

Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: Ash Wednesday provides us with the gift of time and space for repentance. Let us prepare our hearts for the season of Lent by confessing our sins.

All: Righteous God, we join with worshipers all over the globe, uniting in our collective agreement that we desire to be more like you – more loving, more compassionate, more generous, more just, more patient, more faithful.

And as we focus our gaze upon your perfection, we cannot help but witness the ways in which we fail to live according to that standard, both individually and collectively. We have failed on a global scale, perpetuating systems that damage whole groups of people, whole species of creation, and whole generations of children.

One: We have failed on an individual scale in ways only we know in our minds and hearts.

All: So, we confess these sins with full conviction that you bear our sins with compassion and completion. And when we confess our sins, we find liberation from the chains binding us. We pray these things in the name of the one who delivers us from sin. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

The congregation is invited to receive the imposition of ashes, a reminder of our mortality and the eternal nature of God. If you are at home, you may use a bit of soil for this purpose. "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return, but the steadfast love of God endures forever."

A LITANY OF FORGIVENESS AND COMMITMENT

All: We acknowledge and confess our sins of thought, word and deed, and we humbly seek God's forgiveness.

One: God hears the confession of our heart and lips. Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven all our sins, and by the power of the Holy Spirit we are empowered for new life.

All: We believe in the good news of Jesus Christ. From this moment forward we commit to walking in the ways of God's love, peace and justice.

One: God's peace be with you.

BENEDICTION

SOURCE NOTES

Today's Liturgy is from Illustrated Ministry's 2023 Lent Liturgy, *This is My Body*, used here with license permission through purchase from Illustrated Ministry.

Please join us for all our upcoming Lent and Easter Worship services:

Worship on Sunday mornings at 10:30 am

Palm Sunday Service – April 2, 2023

Maundy Thursday Service – April 6, 2023 at 7:30 pm

Easter Sunday – April 9, 2023

Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC

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Sunday Worship 10:30 am

