

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Ash Wednesday and Holy Communion
February 14, 2018
7:00 PM

Welcome to Trinity United Church of Christ. We seek to offer a warm greeting to our visitors, whether you are visiting the area or seeking a church family. To assist you as you worship, we have large print bulletins and hearing assistance devices available. Please see an usher for assistance. We would be happy for you to sign the guest book in the gathering area while you are with us this morning. Whoever you are, wherever you are in life's journey, we are glad that you have come, and pray that you will be blessed by your worship experience. Come and see what God is doing!

**denotes the congregation standing as you are able; congregational responses in bold print*

PRELUDE – “Abide with Me” – R. Hobby

TIME OF SHARING

PREPARING OUR HEARTS AND MINDS FOR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP

Once again, as the season of Lent begins, we are summoned by a gracious and merciful God.

We respond to God's steadfast love, calling us into solemn assembly.

Let all the people gather for self-examination; let all bow in awe before the One who creates.

We approach God in reverence and wonder, rejoicing in the invitation to holy places.

Walk humbly before God in secret disciplines, in prayer and fasting and giving.

We seek the One who grants us life, upholding us with a willing spirit.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

**With eagerness, yet trembling, we return to you, O God,
not just as individuals, but as a family of faith.**

In this season of personal piety,

we would enter into corporate disciplines of prayer and praise and service.

May our prayers be honest and full of care for others.

May our praise involve emotions as well as intellect.

Guide our service, that we may invest ourselves in ways that are worthy of your investment in us.

***GATHERING HYMN # 191 – “Before Your Cross, O Jesus”**

TIME OF CONFESSION

You are invited to observe this season of Lent through self-examination and penitence, prayer and fasting, reading and meditating on the Word of God, and works of love and witness.

Let us approach God with confidence, and confess our sin with honesty and humility.

Lord, it is hard to think that we will die someday.

We dream, we make plans, and talk about what we'll do.

We don't always think about what you want.

Instead, we make choices that we think are good for us.

But we are only here because you take care of us.

We confess that we forget we need you all the time.

We confess that we sometimes make choices that aren't what you want.

We don't know what is best for our lives.

Holy God, help us to remember we live because of your grace.

Help us to do what you want us to do through Jesus, our Lord.

And now let us confess in silence those fears that keep us from loving as Christ has loved us.

WE PRAY FOR GOD'S MERCY

Lord, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Now is the day of salvation, a time for purity and kindness and love.

God is creating a new wholeness within and among us,
that we might serve truthfully and powerfully amid the afflictions and hardships of this world.

Receive the joy that comes with the richness of God's grace.

Accept your new life in Christ Jesus.

RESPONSE HYMN # 188 – "Give Me a Clean Heart"

THE GIVING OF OURSELVES AND OUR OFFERINGS

As we have been directed to pray in secret, so, too, we are invited to give without letting the right hand know what the left hand is doing. When we bring an offering, we are responding to God's generosity, not trying to impress our neighbors. Our tithes already belong to God. Our extra gifts are treasures laid up in heaven. Worship God with your tithes and offerings.

To our visitors - - the finances of the church are the responsibility of our church members.

As our guests, we ask visitors to simply pass the offering plate to the person sitting next to you in the pew.

Offertory – "Before Your Cross, O Jesus" – *D. Cherwien*

*Offertory # 193 "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" (*verse 1*)

In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time;

All the light of sacred story gathers 'round its head sublime.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

As you have been bountiful toward us, loving God, we would be generous in supporting your church. You have made us rich, even in the face of poverty. You have given us all we need, even when it seems we have little. Help us to find the right priorities for all you entrust to us, that our hearts may follow our treasure to their rightful home.

ANTHEM

"When Jesus Wept"

By Williams Billings (1746-1800)

Senior Choir

SCRIPTURE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17 St. Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

HYMN # 197 – "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

QUIET PREPARATION

SERMON

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Gracious God, we praise you and give you thanks.

It is right to give our thanks and praise

We give thanks and praise for all that is good in the world.

For the love we call God, the creator of heaven and earth... we give thanks.

For the person we call Jesus, and his message of peace, justice, and inclusiveness... we give thanks.

For the renewing strength and freedom of the Spirit, always on the breath of life... we give thanks.

**We give thanks for the love, peace, justice, generosity,
strength and freedom that is God working in our midst.**

Let us remember the tradition.

We remember, at the end of a journey, among friends, gathered around a table,

Jesus took bread, gave thanks for all the blessings in his life, and broke it.

We remember at the same table and gathered with the same friends,

Jesus poured a cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his friends, inviting them to drink.

Bread broken, cup full, Jesus set the table.

May the Spirit within us

be a source of healing and consolation.

May the Spirit within us

strengthen us when we feel weak, warm us when we are cold-hearted,

bend us when we are stubborn, move us when we are uncaring, guide us in the way of love.

May the Spirit within us

Shine in all we do.

Bountiful God, at the feast of sacrifice, we ask you to bless us and this bread and wine with the presence of your Holy Spirit, that in our eating and drinking we might share in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Through this meal, make us one with you. Nourish us for faithfulness in the Church of the Redeemer you have sent to reconcile us to you and to one another.

You may come, for all things are now ready.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

***SACRAMENTAL BLESSING**

***THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

God of our salvation, you have restored us to life, you have brought us back again into your love by the triumphant death and resurrection of Christ. Continue to heal us as we go to live and work in the power of your Spirit, to your praise and glory.

Imposition of Ashes

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes.

This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, calls us to heartfelt repentance, and urges us to place our hope in God alone.

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.

May these ashes remind us of our mortality and penitence and teach us again that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

(worshippers are invited to come forward to receive the imposition of ashes.)

***CLOSING HYMN # 99 – “Abide With Me”**

***COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION**

As our worship ends, our service continues;

The Holy Spirit goes with us wherever we go.

By the grace of God, we will do what God intends,
with kindness, purity and genuine love.

May Lent be not an outer show but an inner discipline,
a time for spiritual growth and shared commitment.

**We will fast and pray and give,
knowing that God who sees in secret will be with us.**

POSTLUDE – “Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”