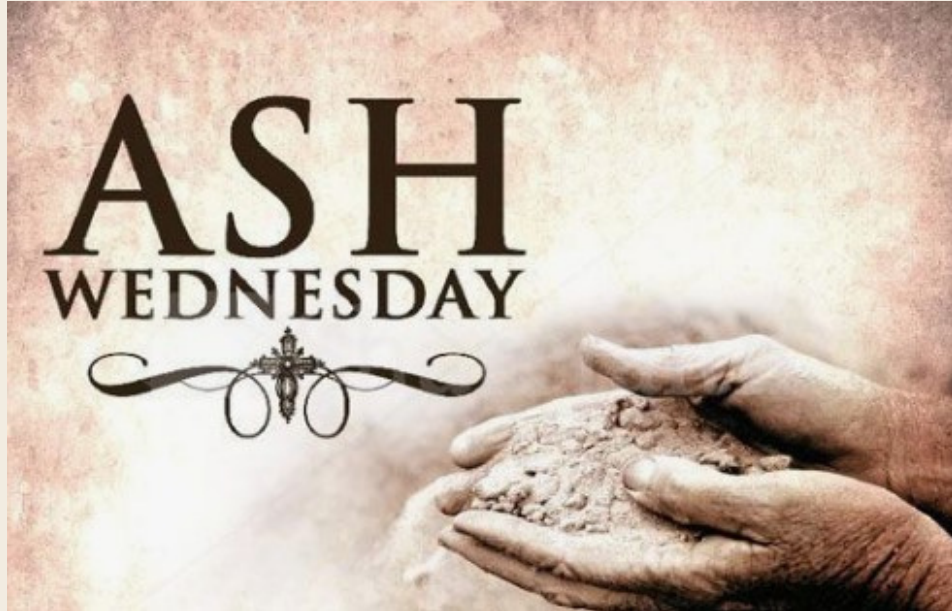




**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
February 14, 2024**



Ash Wednesday Service

**Receive this cross of ash upon your brow,
Brought from the burning of Palm Sunday's cross.
The forests of the world are burning now
And you make late repentance for the loss.
But all the trees of God would clap their hands
The very stones themselves would shout and sing
If you could covenant to love these lands
And recognize in Christ their Lord and king.
He sees the slow destruction of those trees,
He weeps to see the ancient places burn,
And still you make what purchases you please,
And still to dust and ashes you return.
But Hope could rise from ashes even now
Beginning with this sign upon your brow.**

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Words to Enter Worship

We gather in the dimness of evening to be with the God who brightens the shadows of our lives.

We gather in the quiet of this place to be with Jesus, knowing that nothing past, present or future separates us.

We gather to be marked as disciples to be fed for the journey through Lent, to be sealed by the Spirit as God's own.

Opening Hymn – #207 Just as I Am ([click here](#))

Litany of Penitence

Response:

One: Lord have mercy

Many: **Christ have mercy**

Prayer of Lament

One: Let us come into prayer.

All: Merciful God, we gather as the body of Christ aware that we have not always done our best to follow Jesus in proclaiming the kingdom; healing people, our communities, and the world; and working for justice. We acknowledge that our actions and words too often focus on our own comfort and our well-being. We confess that our hearts and minds do not reflect your love and light as well as they should. Be with us, O LORD, this evening, be with us and restore our hearts and community. Bind us together with sighs too deep for human words offered by your Spirit. Send us with renewed conviction and faith to be your people, blessed and blessing the world.

One: Be still and know that there is a God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

Many: **We come to be still and listen, filled with love and compassion, preparing ourselves to be salt, light, and leaven.**

One: Lord have Mercy

Many: **Christ have mercy**

Time of Silence

Scripture Reading –Genesis 3:19

by the sweat of your face, you will eat bread—
until you return to the fertile land,
since from it you were taken;
you are earth,
to the earth you will return.”

Scripture Reading – Mark 9:30-37

30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it, **31** for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” **32** But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

33 Then they came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” **34** But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. **35** He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” **36** Then he took a little child and put it among them, and taking it in his arms he said to them, **37** “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

Meditation Must be last and servant of all

Imposition of Ashes – Those who wish to have ashes may come forward
Response and Prayers

Evening prayer:

You wait on this evening, Patient God, for us to come back:
to stop going away from you on our self-focused travels;
to set aside our empty fears;
to cease shaping you in our image,
so we can discover you closer than we ever dared imagine.

You wait for us this night, Companion of our hearts, for us to follow once more:
The dust of life: leaving the shuttered corners of our lives;
refusing to go from one failed promise to another;
coming out of the panic rooms we have built in our souls,
so you can take us by the hand to lead us to resurrection life.

You wait in scattered ashes of our lives, Spirit of silence, for us to find you:
so you can embrace us with joy and hope in every moment

Invitation to Lenten Journey

Closing Hymn #286 Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness ([click here](#))

Benediction

Lent Series—Rest is Resistance

February 21 – Rest!

February 28 – Dream!

March 6 – Resist!

March 13 – Imagine!

March 20 – Kingdom Building!



Announcements



Prayer List: The Family of Bob Lohn, The Family of Nancy Cihlar, Rhonda Silence, The Family of Meredith Eliot (Church-Davison), Vicki Biggs-Anderson, Paulette Anholm, Mike Carlson, Sally Dunn, The Carter Family, All Victims of Gun Violence, Immigrants and Refugees, Countries of Congo, Ukraine, Sudan, Isreal/Palestine, and Planet Earth.

At home and Care Center: Jean Ljungkull, Nona Smith, Lou Goodell, Bev Denyes, and Tom Hedstrom.

Measure of our Faithfulness:

The First Congregational UCC adopted a 2024 Budget at the Annual Meeting on 28 January 2024, showing a need for a yearly income of \$175,834.

After five weeks, the Budget Donations and Income should be \$16,907.12. The actual donations and income have reached \$39,196.13.

This Week at the Church

Sunday, February 11

9:30 AM – Choir Practice

10:30 AM – **Transfiguration Sunday** –

This is the story of Jesus going up the mountain with Peter, James, and John to talk with Elijah and Moses. The light that shone through Jesus that night shines through us today, maybe not in dazzling white, but in ways that show God's love and we are all God's beloved. Come to church in your dazzling clothes as we are having a **Mardi Gras potluck** after worship.

2:00 PM – Worship at Care Center

Monday, February 12

11:00 AM – Spring Forest Qigong

2:00 PM – 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM - Food Shelf

Al-Anon is taking a break until March

Tuesday, February 13

9:15 AM – Cook County Sheriff
Chaplains

1:00 PM – ASTR Meeting with Building
and Grounds Committee

2:00 PM – Narrative Lectionary Study

2:00 PM – 6:00 PM – Piano Lessons

2:00 – 4:00 PM – ASTR meeting with
community groups

6:30 PM – Town Hall with ASTR:
Everyone is welcome!

Wednesday, February 14

Happy Valentines Day!

2:00 PM – 6:00 PM – Piano Lessons

5:30 PM – Pizza and Social Justice

7:00 PM – Ash Wednesday Service

Thursday, February 15

10:00 AM - Tai Chi

12:00 PM - Women's AA

2:00 PM - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons

3:30-5:30 PM – Cook County Public
Health (Media Room)

Friday, February 16

7:00 AM - AA

8:00 AM - Harbor Watch

2:00 PM - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons

7:30 PM - AA

Saturday, February 17

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM - Piano Lessons

10:30 AM – Surely Discipleship Group

Sunday, February 18

9:30 AM – Choir Practice

10:30 AM – **1st Sunday in Lent** – Up to Jesus comes a young man, who is earnest and wanting to do what is right, wanting to inherit eternal life. Jesus saw him and loved him, but realized there was something else that person loved more than the Kingdom of Heaven.

Fellowship to Follow.

Opening Hymn – #207 **Just as I Am**

1. Just as I am, without one plea
but that your blood was shed for me,
And that you called inviting me,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

2. Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

3. Just as I am, you will receive,
will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve:
Because your promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

4. Just as I am, your love unknown
has broken every barrier down;
Now to be yours, and yours alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

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*Words, Charlotte Elliott, 1836, alt.
Tune, William B. Bradbury, 1849.
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Closing Hymn #286 **Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness**

Refrain: Spirit, spirit of gentleness,
blow through the wilderness calling and free,
Spirit, spirit of restlessness,
stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.

1. You move on the waters, you called to the deep,
then you coaxed up the mountains from the valleys of sleep;
And over the eons you called to each thing,
“Awake from your slumbers and rise on your wings”

2. You swept though the desert, you stung with the sand,
and you goaded your people with a law and a land;
When they were confounded by their idols and lies,
then you spoke through your prophets to open their eyes.

3. You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill,
then you whispered in silence when the whole world was still
And down in the city you called once again,
when you blew through your people on the rush of the wind.

4. You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes,
from the bondage of sorrow the captive dream dreams;
Our women see visions, our men clear their eyes.
With bold new decisions your people arise.

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*By James K Manley, 1978; alt.
Arr. The New Century Hymnal, 1993
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