



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC LEADER
GATHERED TO SHARE GOD'S LOVE



A S H
W E D N E S D A Y

Ash Wednesday is a day of penitence to mark the beginning of lent – the forty days of preparation for the paschal celebrations of Easter. Ash Wednesday is a particular time for new beginnings in the faith, a time for returning to God. On this day we recall our mortality and pray for a receiving spirit. This is a time for putting aside the sins and failures of the past in the context of repentance and growth in grace. We are to be tested in Lent in preparation for a richer experience of Easter.

FEBRUARY 14TH, 2018

Gathering of God's People

PRELUDE

Oh Holy Jesus, Johannes Brahms

*GREETING AND WELCOME

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

And also with you.

Bless the Lord O my Soul and all that is within me bless his Holy Name

Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all of God's benefits.

Who forgives all your sins and heals all of your infirmities;

Who redeems your life from the grace and crowns you in mercy and loving kindness.

*SENTENCES

Let us look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was waiting endured the cross.

*OPENING HYMN

#81, Lord Who Throughout These 40 Days

CALL TO CONFESSION

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from the love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, study, and works of love help us return to that love. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to love God and neighbor by confessing your sin and by asking God for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

Silence

Let us pray.

Most holy and merciful God, we confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with all our heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways and our exploitation of other people,

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts and our dishonesty in our daily life and work,

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our negligence in prayer and worship and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

Have mercy on us, O God.

Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrongs we have done. For our neglect of human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

Accept our repentance, O God.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

Accept our repentance, O God.

For our waste and pollution of your creation and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

Accept our repentance, O God.

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

Favorably hear us, O God, for your mercy is great. Amen.

Silence

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Almighty God does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore we implore God to grant us true repentance and the Holy Spirit that those things which we do this day may be pleasing to God, that the rest of our lives may be lived faithfully, and that at the last we may come to God's eternal joy; through Jesus the Christ.

Thanks be to God!

RECEIVING THE ASHES

Come now, all who seek a mark of confession and freedom from all that would hinder our focus on the Lenten Journey ahead.

All are invited to come forward down the center aisle to be anointed with ashes, either on the forehead or on the back of the hand. Please return to your seats by the side aisles.

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

In this purple-hued season, God of mercy, we need the light of your Word to break forth like the dawn. If you will guide us continually, then even the parched places in us will be like a watered garden. If words of blame are replaced with your Word of grace and truth, then our crumbling foundations can be rebuilt for generations. By the power of your Holy Spirit, speak to us and do not hold back. In Christ's name we ask it. Amen.

A reading from Joel.

Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the Lord, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.
Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain-offering and a drink-offering
for the Lord, your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep.
Let them say, 'Spare your people, O Lord,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations.

Why should it be said among the peoples,

"Where is their God?"

Then the Lord became jealous for his land,
and had pity on his people.

In response to his people the Lord said:

I am sending you
grain, wine, and oil,
and you will be satisfied;
and I will no more make you
a mockery among the nations.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 51

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD

Psalms 51:10-13

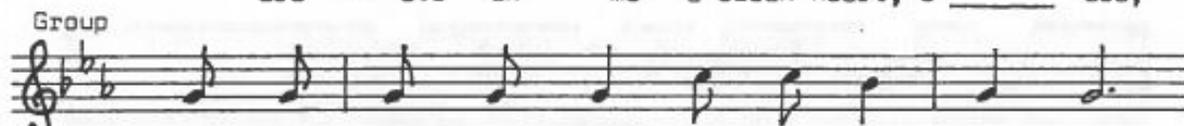
Jim Strathdee

(Leader)



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O _____ God,

Group



(Leader) and re - new a right spir - it with - in me.

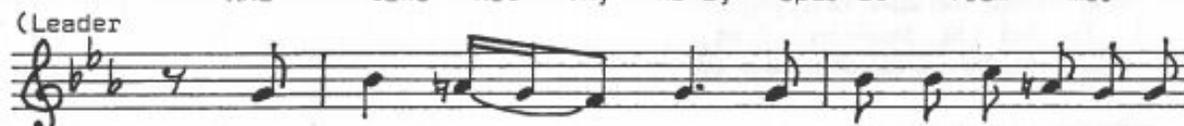


Group Cast me not a - way from Thy pres - ence,



And take not Thy ho - ly spir - it from me.

(Leader)



Re - store to _____ me the joy of Thy sal - va - tion

Group



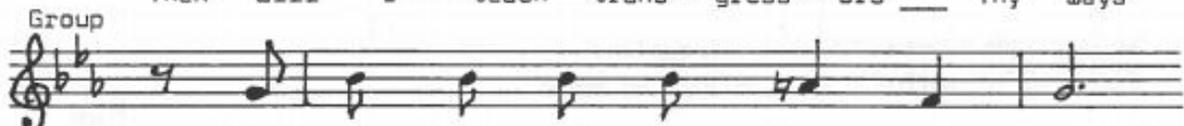
And up - hold me with a will - ing spir - it.

(Leader)



Then will I teach trans - gress - ors _____ Thy ways

Group

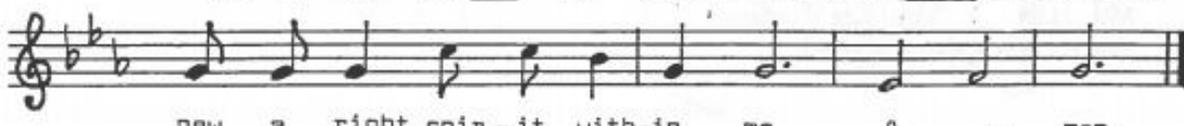


And sin - ners will re - turn to Thee.

(All to End)



Cre - ate in _____ me a clean heart, O _____ God, And re -



new a right spir - it with - in me A - men.

LESSON

2 Corinthians 5: 20b-6:2

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18

A Reading from Matthew.

"Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you O Christ.

SERMON*People on a Journey*

Rev. Michael Swartz

Somos pueblo que camina (We Are People on a Journey)

"Misa Popular Nicaragüense," 20th century; alt.
English version, Carolyn Jennings, 1993

John 6:32-5

1 So-mos pue-blo que ca - mi - na por la sen - da del do - lor.
 2 Los hu - mil - des y los po - bres in - vi - ta - dos son de Dios.
 1 We are peo-ple on a jour - ney; pain is with us all the way.
 2 God has sent the in - vi - ta - tion to the hum-ble and the poor.

Estribillo (Refrain)

A - cu - da-mos ju - bi - lo - sos a la san - ta co - mu - ni - ón.
 Joy - ful - ly we come to - geth - er at the ho - ly feast of God.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 Es-te pan que Dios nos brin-da
a-li-men-ta nues-tra u-nión. (<i>Estribillo</i>) | 3 This is bread that God pro-vides us,
nour-ish-ing our u-ni-ty. (<i>Refrain</i>) |
| 4 Cris-to a-quí se ha-ce pre-sen-te;
al reu-nir-nos es su a-mor. (<i>Estribillo</i>) | 4 Christ is ev-er pres-ent with us
to u-nite us all in love. (<i>Refrain</i>) |
| 5 Los se-dien-tos de jus-ti-cia
bus-can su li-be-ra-ción. (<i>Estribillo</i>) | 5 All who tru-ly thirst for jus-tice
seek their lib-er-a-tion here. (<i>Refrain</i>) |

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Go Forth into the world in the strength of God's mercy to serve in newness of life. May Jesus Christ, the head of love, bless and keep you. Amen.

May the lamb of God who laid down his life for all, graciously smile upon you. Amen.

May the sovereign God order all your days and deeds in peace. Amen.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

SERVING TODAY

Usher

Bruce Wood

Lector

Audra Bailey

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC STAFF

Rev. Craig Jan-McMahon, *Senior Pastor*

Rev. Michael Swartz, *Associate Pastor*

Maureen Holmes, *Chancel Choir Director*

Mason Moss, *Interim Organist/Pianist*

Gail Glockhoff-Long, *Campanella Ringers Director*

Jennifer Dailing, *Office Assistant*

Amber Moore, *Director of Marketing and Communications*

Becca Peterson, *Director of Family Ministry*

Sara Otta, *Finance Manager*

Wes Llewellyn, *Fellowship Coordinator*

Harleigh Jones, *Nursery Coordinator*

Amanda Peterson, *Red Wagon Preschool Director*

Mike DeToye and Ron Mahar, *Custodians*



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