



ASH WEDNESDAY

March 2, 2022

**Noon in Trinity Chapel
7:30 pm in Main Sanctuary**

EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH

United Church of Christ

- An Open and Affirming Congregation -

*All who are able may stand

Prelude

A Call to Begin the Lenten Journey

***Call to Worship**

“Even now, declares the Lord,
return to me with all your heart.” (Joel 2:12)

Roll up your sleeves.

Let down your guard.

Come in from the storm.

Make yourself at home.

Pull up to the table.

Release the tension in your jaw.

Take a deep breath.

Return to God

with all your heart.

May it be so.

***Prayer for Illumination**

**Loving Creator, we are here,
telling stories of dust.**

**We are here, trying to shake the dust
out of our ears so that we might hear you clearly.**

**We are here, hoping that showing up
is the first step in returning to you.**

**Scoop us up in your embrace
and carry us to a place of truth.**

Clear the smog that makes it hard to see.

Clear the dust that makes it hard to hear.

We are at the edge of our seats.

We are listening for you. Amen

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession**

Holy God, I confess: I don't return to you fully.

I share with you the pieces of my life that are convenient.

I put on different hats in different rooms.

**I forget that I am called, invited, and loved with all that I am –
including my mess, my beauty, my faith, and my doubt.**

Forgive me, and give me a heart that longs to return.

***Words of Forgiveness**

Friend, God sees you. God hears you. God loves you. You are
forgiven and claimed with all that you are. Rest in that good news.

Thanks be to God, amen.

Anthem *Create in Me*

--M. Larkin
Senior Choir

Scripture Reading Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Reflection

Silence

Anointing with Ashes

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in an expansive love
that healed the sick,
welcomed the children,
and saw this world as it could be.**

**We believe that that expansive love
runs over the edges of our lives,
smoothing our rough places,
and pulling us home.**

**We call that expansive love
Yaweh and Mother God,
Jesus and Divine Creator.**

**Thanks be to God for a
Love like that. Amen**

Communion Prayer

You invite us to this table, Holy One:
out of our places of testing,
in our wonderings of the possibility of rebirth,
for the sake of our yearnings
for life-giving waters and bread enough for all,
into new ways and hopes of seeing.
So gathered, may we open ourselves to you.

We give you thanks, O God,
for your steady presence all through our journeys.
Whether in wilderness or community,
whether in word or sacrament,
you come to us:
seeking our wholeness,
binding our wounds,
challenging our presumptions,
restoring our life.

And so we join the song of witnesses long past and yet to come:

**Holy, holy, holy One, God of power and might
heaven and earth are full of your glory
Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God
Hosanna in the highest!**

Our praise flows from and toward
the mystery of your grace.
Such mystery marks this table before us,
where disciples of old gathered on the eve of betrayal,
and Jesus broke bread and shared the cup.
The gifts of bread and wine were offered to all,
even to the ones who betrayed and denied,
even to the ones who fled into the night,
even to them – so that this table might also be opened, even to us.
So come, Holy One, in grace and peace,
in bread and fruit of the vine,
in faith that embraces the mystery of your presence,
in spirits turned now to Spirit. Amen.

Sharing of the Bread and the Cup

*You are invited to come forward to the chancel rail to receive the gift
of holy communion.*

***A Blessing**

***Closing Hymn** *In the Cross of Christ I Glory*

#193

Lent 2022 at ERUCC

Full to the Brim



Full to the Brim is an invitation—into a radically different Lent, into a full life. It’s an invitation to be authentically who you are, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed. When we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God’s lavish love, that love spills over. It reaches beyond ourselves; like water, it rushes and flows, touching everything in its path.

And so, this Lent, let us trust – fully – that we belong to God. Let us increase our capacity to receive and give grace. Let us discover the expansive life God dreams for us. Lenten devotionals are available at the back of the sanctuary.

MID-WEEK LENTEN SERVICES

Wednesdays March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13

Noon – 12:15 pm

Service of Prayer in Trinity Chapel

Lunch and Bible Study Reflection

12:15 – 1:00 pm

Theme: For the Beauty of the Earth

Each week during the season of Lent, a group gathers for prayer followed by a simple soup and bread lunch, and some reflection. Read more about our mid-week Lenten services in the March edition of the Trinity Chimes.

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY with Pastor Daniel

Liz Coffey Room

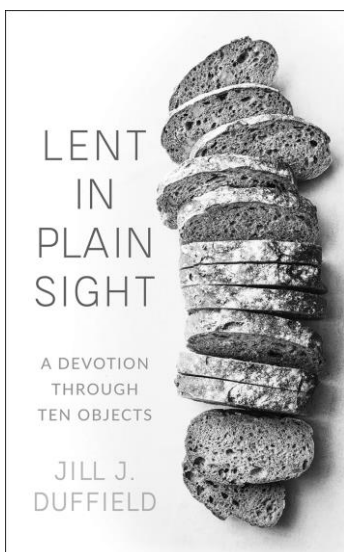
11:00 – Noon

March 8 – April 12

Lent in Plain Sight

To join via Zoom: bit.ly/3K21Hav Meeting ID: 897 6651 9688

Passcode: 357385



God is often at work through the ordinary: ordinary people, ordinary objects, ordinary grace. Through the ordinary, God communicates epiphanies, salvation, revelation, and reconciliation. It is through the mundane that we hear God’s quiet voice.

In this devotion for the season of Lent, Jill J. Duffield draws readers’ attention to ten ordinary objects that Jesus would have encountered on his way to Jerusalem: dust, bread, the cross, coins, shoes, oil, coats, towels, thorns, and stones. In each object, readers will find meaning in the biblical account of Jesus’ final days. Each week, readers encounter a new object to consider through Scripture, prayer, and reflection. From Ash Wednesday to Easter, *Lent in Plain Sight* reminds Christians to open ourselves to the kingdom of God.

WHAT IS LENT

The church year is divided into seasons. The church year begins on the first Sunday in Advent, which is the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. After Advent we enter into the season of Christmas, followed the seasons of Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost.

Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent. The traditions of Lent are derived from the season's origin as a time when the church prepared candidates, or "catechumens," for their baptism into the Body of Christ. It eventually became a season of preparation not only for catechumens but also for the whole congregation. Self-examination, study, fasting, prayer and works of love are disciplines historically associated with Lent. Conversion—literally, the "turning around" or reorientation of our lives towards God—is the theme of Lent. Both as individuals and as a community, we look inward and reflect on our readiness to follow Jesus in his journey towards the cross. The forty days of Lent correspond to the forty-day temptation of Jesus in the wilderness and the forty-year journey of Israel from slavery to a new community.

On Ash Wednesday, ashes are placed on the foreheads of the congregation as a symbol that we have come from dust and one day will return to dust. It is one of many Lenten and Easter customs that remind us of our historical connection with Jewish tradition. With this sobering reminder of life's fragility, we begin a spiritual quest that continues to the celebration of the risen Christ at Easter.

Each season of the Church Year is symbolized with different colors. The colors express emotions and ideas that are associated with each of the seasons of the liturgical year. The cloths on the altar, lectern and pulpit – paraments – reflect these changing seasons. On Wednesday through Good Friday, the purple or violet paraments will be present in the sanctuary. Violet is the ancient royal color and therefore a symbol of the sovereignty of Christ. Violet is also associated with repentance from sin.

Please join us as we enter the season on Lent.

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Stardust

by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Acrylic on raw canvas with digital drawing

Many of us begin Lent with ashen marks smudged against our foreheads, the oil glistening on our skin throughout the rest of the day. It's a mark that is holy because it tells the truth: we are formed from the dust, and to dust we shall one day return. We are not immortal. Death will one day find us all.

However, as we've crafted this Lenten series around the theme, *Full to the Brim*, we've found ourselves asking for more from our Lenten journey. Yes, death will surely find me one day, inhaling me into that infinite abyss. But the cross on my forehead only tells me part of the story. The empty tomb tells me a fuller, more expansive truth: death will not have the last word. There is more. God is more.

This expansive truth requires more of us. It invites us to abandon empty or showy practices of faith, and instead, draw inward to open ourselves to a deeper journey of transformation. It requires me to believe that I am truly worthy of love, belonging, and grace. It requires me to believe others are also.

In this Lenten season, we've reimagined this Ash Wednesday ritual. What if, instead of ashes, gold gleamed on our foreheads? What if, alongside the certainty of death, we are also reminded of God's expansive grace? What if on this day we said to one another, "From stardust you have come, and to stardust you shall one day return"?

– A Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity