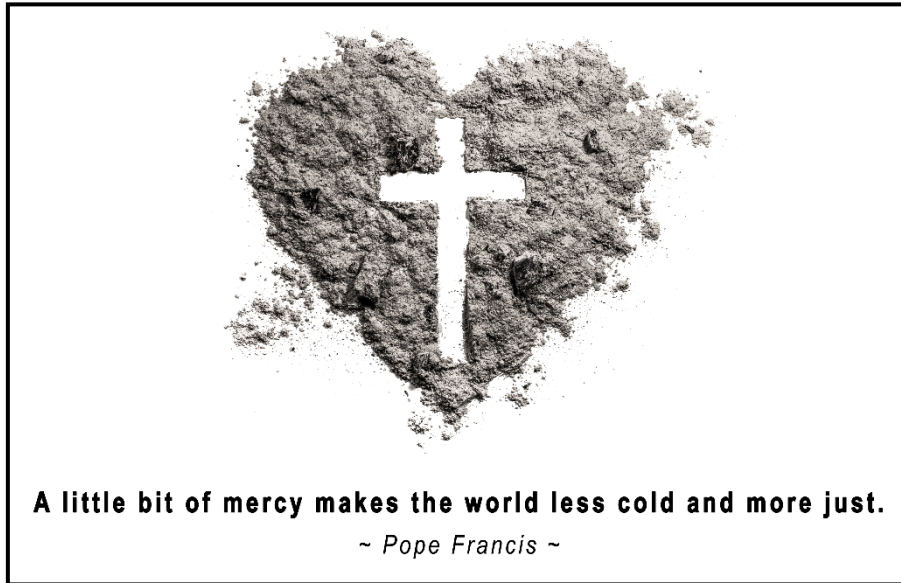


ZION REFORMED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

FEBRUARY 17TH, 2021 @ 7 P.M.

ASH WEDNESDAY



Beloved Dust to Dust

WELCOME to *your* faith community! We are happy to worship with you today and pray that your spirit will be blessed by our time together in the presence of God. If this is your first time at Zion, welcome! Zion Reformed United Church of Christ has roots over 250 years in the making. We invite you to consider making Zion Reformed UCC your church home if you haven't already and join us on the journey as we listen for the still-speaking voice of God together.

Today as our Lenten journey begins, we remember our mortality and sinfulness through the symbolism of ashes but let us not lose hope for those ashes are applied with a sense of hope and the confidence in the promise that brings us to this moment. The prophet, Joel, spoke of trembling before the day of darkness at the same time that he spoke of the hope that persists. We choose, as followers of Christ, to let Hope have the final word, even over our sin and our fragility. There must be some light of Resurrection that guides our steps, even as we take the first one. It has been a tedious journey coping with a global pandemic unlike any we have ever experienced, but hope remains through Christ Jesus.

Lent is about embracing the Resurrected One with a whole and longing heart. We discover as we make those preparations that there are so many things that get in the way of our true embrace of the risen Christ. Some of those things are external, but many of them are internal. They are habits and preferences and inclinations that clutter our souls. So, the season of Lent comes along to give us space and appropriate reminders that we need to clean house to receive the one we call Lord. It is a time of renewal, of repair, for we are repairing for such a time as this!

Let us remember, refresh, and renew as we worship the Almighty this day!

WE GATHER

Words of Welcome

Call to Worship

Based on Gen 2:7 & 3:19; Psalm 104:29-30; & John 1:18

One: Friends and neighbors, in the middle of this season of Covid-19, we pause to observe Ash Wednesday together as a faith community.

All: We remember that God made us from fragile, blessed dust and breathes through us the breath of life and love.

One: From dust we are created in God's image and to God's good dust we shall return.

All: With dust and oil we claim the mark of God's beloved creature.

One: Today we begin our 40-day Lenten journey to discover who we are created to be as God's beloved.

All: In daily practices of prayer and service we will embark upon this Lenten journey.

One: We follow Jesus, God's Beloved Child, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh in whom we see God's image most clearly.

All: So, come, let us pray for strength and imagination to follow Jesus wherever he will lead us this Lent.

Prelude to Worship ✠

"Alle Menschen"

WE MEDITATE

God Remembered Noah

Genesis 9:8-17 (NRSV)

Lector: Amber Nilson

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹ "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹² God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³ I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." ¹⁷ God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

God Remembered Abraham

Genesis 19:24-29

Lector: Rae Smith

²⁴ Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven; ²⁵ and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶ But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. ²⁷ Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD; ²⁸ and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the Plain and saw the smoke of the land going up like the smoke of a furnace. ²⁹ So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the Plain, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had settled.

God Remembered Rachel

Genesis 30:1-2, 22-24

Lector: Michael Jones

¹ When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister; and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!" ² Jacob became very angry with Rachel and said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" ²² Then God remembered Rachel, and God heeded her and opened her womb. ²³ She conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach"; ²⁴ and she named him Joseph, saying, "May the Lord add to me another son!"

God Remembered Israel

Exodus 3:1-12

Lector: Pastor Katie

¹ Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³ Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." ⁴ When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. ⁷ Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain."

Meditative Interlude 

"O Sacred Head"

God's People are Called to Remember God

Exodus 13:17-22; Deuteronomy 15:15

Lector: Rae Smith

¹⁷ When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was nearer; for God thought, "If the people face war, they may change their minds and return to Egypt." ¹⁸ So God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt prepared for battle. ¹⁹ And Moses took with him the bones of Joseph who had required a solemn oath of the Israelites, saying, "God will surely take notice of you, and then you must carry my bones with you from here." ²⁰ They set out from Succoth, and camped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. ²¹ The LORD went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night. ²² Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. ^{15:15} Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; for this reason I lay this command upon you today.

God's People Forget

Selections from Jeremiah

Lector: Michael Jones

^{18:31} Hurl away from you all your offenses which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why should you die, house of Israel? ^{36:26} Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ^{24:7} For I will give you a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me wholeheartedly.

God Never Forgets

Hebrews 8:8-12

Lector: Pastor Katie

⁸ God finds fault with them when he says: "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; ⁹ not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors, on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in my covenant, and so I had no concern for them, says the Lord. ¹⁰ This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹¹ And they shall not teach one another or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹² For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

WE RESPOND

Litany of Confession

Based on Psalm 51

Have mercy, tender God, forget that I defied you. Wash away my sin, cleanse me from my guilt.

I know my evil well, it stares me in the face, evil done to you alone before your very eyes.

How right your condemnation! Your verdict is clearly just. You see me for what I am: frail, a sinner.

You love those centered in truth; teach me your hidden wisdom. Wash me with fresh water, wash me bright and clean.

Fill me with happy songs! Let the bones you bruised now dance, shut your eyes to my sin, make my guilt disappear.

Creator, reshape my heart, God, steady my spirit. Do not cast me aside stripped of your holy spirit.

Save me, bring back my joy, support me, strengthen my will, then I will teach your way and sinners will turn to you.

Help me, stop my tears, and I will sing your goodness. Lord, give me words and I will shout your praise.

Words of Assurance

Here the Good News: Know that God loves you, forgives you, welcomes you, and rejoices in you. And let God refresh, remind, and reassure you of God's transforming love.

Imposition of Ashes

All are invited to use the ashes you have received from the church. If they have been delayed in the mail, you can always use them on another day of Lent with this service video available on the website or using another format.

You may place ashes on your foreheads or hands in the shape of a cross while meditative music plays; and as you apply the ashes on yourself or one another, please say:

**Remember that you are God's beloved dust,
and to God's beloved dust you shall return.**

Contemplative Interlude[✦]

"Prayer of Saint Gregory"

Time for imposition of ashes at home, and reflective meditation.

Our Savior's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Give

May we give of ourselves as a symbol of our appreciation for receiving the mark of God's love in such beautiful and meaningful ways. As you have been given the mark of God's love, may you give in return, throughout the world. Amen.

Offertory Interlude ✦

"Forty Days and Forty Nights"

Blessing Our Gifts (Prayer of Dedication)

Creator God, may the gifts we offer today be used to share your love with all – in our church, our community, and your world. Amen.

Sending Forth

Blessings, like God's love, are not one-way experiences. As you have been blessed with the mark of God's love, you are now called to go out from this place and bless others. May the God who created you, create opportunities of serving others. May the Christ who teaches you, teach you during Lent how to love all. And may the Spirit of Gentleness be your companion along this Lenten journey. Amen.

Prelude to Service ✦

"Prelude in A-Minor"

GO FORTH IN PEACE & SERVE!




"...you are dust, and to dust you shall return"
(Genesis 3:19)

Lent, Holy Week, and Easter Services 2021



Worship with Us!

 **Lent:** The season of Lent is a time for personal reflection, repentance, and growth. It is a season where we focus upon prayer, fasting, and works of love as expressions of our faith. A season of renewal and grace, restoring right relationships, letting God lead, and the light shine out of the darkness as we journey to the cross. While a solemn season of penitence and reflection, Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays) marked by repentance, fasting, and reflection that ultimately lead to celebration. This Lent we will focus on repair, “Repairing: For Such a time as this!”

| | | |
|---|---|---------------|
| Ash Wednesday Virtual Worship Service , February 17 th at 7pm | ✦ | (Lent Begins) |
| First Week in Lent Sunday Worship , February 21 st at 11am | ✦ | (Wilderness) |
| Second Sunday in Lent Sunday Worship , February 28 th at 11am | ✦ | (Sacrifice) |
| Third Sunday in Lent Sunday Worship , March 7 th at 11am | ✦ | (Protest) |
| Fourth Sunday in Lent Sunday Worship , March 14 th at 11am | ✦ | (Salvation) |
| Fifth Sunday in Lent Sunday Worship , March 21 st at 11am | ✦ | (Covenant) |
| Palm Sunday Virtual Worship Service , March 28 th at 11am | ✦ | (Redemption) |

*All Worship Services available virtually at <https://zionreformed.church/sermons>.

**For more info about Sunday Fellowship Hour and Thursday Fellowship Hour: <https://zionreformed.church/fellowship>.



Holy Week & Easter: Holy Week continues our journey toward the cross, taking us through the shame and suffering endured by Christ to those torturous final moments upon the cross. But Easter is only around the corner, that glorious morning we know all so well! That morning when Christ conquered death and rose from the dead giving us new life, ensuring that grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love are available to us every day, anytime we need it. And, oh how we need it every day! As we celebrate the transformative power of the new life Christ offers us this Easter season, we will focus our attention on “Renewing: Is Anything too Wonderful for Our God?”

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| Maundy Thursday Zoom Service , April 1 st at 7pm | ✦ | (Bread & Cup of Life) |
| Good Friday Virtual Service , April 2 nd at 7pm | ✦ | (It is Finished) |
| Easter Sunday Virtual Service , April 4 th (Available at Sunrise) | ✦ | (New Life) |

*Maundy Thursday Service will be via Zoom/dial-in and will be uploaded to the website at the conclusion of the service. All other Worship Services available virtually at <https://zionreformed.church/sermons>.

**There will be no Adult Sunday School at 9:45am on Easter Sunday, nor Sunday Fellowship Hour at 12:30pm on Easter Sunday due to family gatherings. Sunday School will resume the following week via Zoom and dial-in at 9:45am, as will Sunday Fellowship Hour at 12:30pm via Zoom and dial-in on Sunday afternoons. <https://zionreformed.church/fellowship>.

SERVICE CREDITS

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