



**St. Paul's
United Methodist Church
ASH WEDNESDAY
February 14, 2024 7:00p.m.**

Welcome! We're glad you have come to worship with us,
and we hope you will join us for Sunday worship at 10:30 am.

Gathering as The Beloved Community

Gathering Music "Contemplation" *Molly MacMillan, piano*
by McCoy Tyner

Greeting & Welcome *Pastor Beckie Sweet*

Introduction to Ash Wednesday

Centering Music "500 Year Old Melody" *Molly MacMillan, piano*
(traditional) *Jackson Robinson, piano*

***Call to Worship & Opening Prayer**

O God of time and space, we are not sure we can slow down long enough
to fast and pray.

Help us make room for You!

We have too often crowded you out, too busy even to make a change.

Help us find room for You!

We come to you wanting to be different, to be forgiven,
to embody and share your love.

**Let us be room for You. In the name of Jesus,
who invites us to wholeness. Amen.**

***Hymn** "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days" *UMH # 269*

Encountering God Through the Word

Responsive Psalm **Psalm 51:10-17 (NRSV)** *Jami Breedlove-Crouch*

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

**Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Deliver me from death, O God, God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth your praise.

For you have no delight in sacrifice;
were I to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

**The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

Special Music

“Down in the River to Pray”
(trad.)

Maia Finkel, vocals
Alice Meilman, vocals

Scripture Readings

Matthew 6:1-6 (NRSV)

Larry Roberts

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² “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. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵ “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. ⁶ 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.

moments of silence

Matthew 6:1-6 (MSG)

David McElrath

“Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don’t make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won’t be applauding.

²⁻⁴ “When you do something for someone else, don’t call attention to yourself. You’ve seen them in action, I’m sure—‘playactors’ I call them—treating prayer meeting and street corner alike as a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds. They get applause, true, but that’s all they get. When you help someone out, don’t think about how it looks. Just do it—quietly and unobtrusively. That is the way your God, who conceived you in love, working behind the scenes, helps you out.

⁵ “And when you come before God, don’t turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for fifteen minutes of fame! Do you think God sits in a box seat?

⁶ “Here’s what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God!

Meditation “BUSY: Reconnecting with an Unhurried God” *Pastor Beckie Sweet*

Responding by Seeking God’s Grace

***Hymn of Response** “Come and Find The Quiet Center ” FWS #2128

Invitation to the Lenten Observance *Jami Breedlove-Crouch*
moments of silence

Introduction & Invitation to Receive Ashes

All are welcome to come forward to receive ashes as desired.

Invitation to Lenten Practices

moments of silence

Closing Prayer & The Lord’s Prayer

Going Forth to Serve and to Bless

***Closing** “It Is Well With My Soul” UMH # 377

Dismissal with Blessing

Postlude “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy” *Molly MacMillan, piano*
by Joe Zawinal

Ash Wednesday

In the 6th Century, the church began a ritual at the beginning of the Lenten season of imposing ashes made from the previous year's Palm Sunday palm branches as a reminder that God created us from dust and to dust we will return. In between the clay of creation and the dust of death is a life worth living and living fully. In this season we will listen to the still, small voice of God and find our own voice in the conversation. But first, we must make "the turn" toward the divine. As you come to receive ashes, you are invited on a journey with Jesus, symbolized by your journey to receive the ashes. As you make turns in your journey, imagine this turning as your turning toward God for this forty-day Lenten season, and in a much deeper way than you have in the past. May these gestures of turning, repenting, being cleansed, and journeying with Christ instill a profound sense of being changed for the future of a discipleship of love.

Our Staff

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"St. Paul's is a compassionate community led and transformed by the Spirit."

St. Paul's United Methodist Church A Reconciling Congregation

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www.stpaulsithaca.org



Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days 269



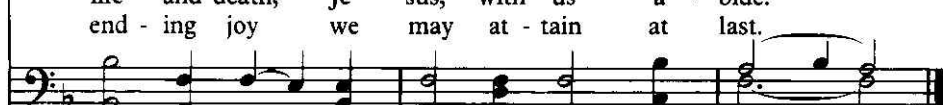
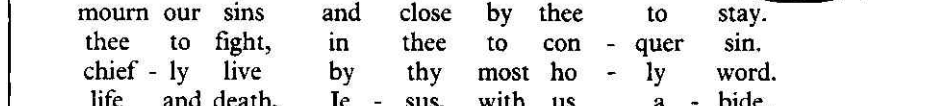
1. Lord, who through-out these for-ty days for
 2. As thou with Sa-tan didst con-tend, and
 3. As thou didst hun-ger bear, and thirst, so
 4. And through these days of pen-i-tence, and
 5. A-bide with us, that so, this life of



us didst fast and pray, teach us with thee to
 didst the vic-tory win, O give us strength in
 teach us, gra-cious Lord, to die to self, and
 through thy pas-sion-tide, yea, ev-er-more in
 suf-fering o-ver past, an Eas-ter of un-



mourn our sins and close by thee to stay.
 thee to fight, in thee to con-quer sin.
 chief-ly live by thy most ho-ly word.
 life and death, Je-sus, with us a-bide.
 end-ing joy we may at-tain at last.



WORDS: Claudia F. Hernaman, 1873 (Mt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13)

MUSIC: USA folk melody; arr. by Anabel Morris Buchanan, 1938;

harm. by Charles H. Webb, 1988

LAND OF REST

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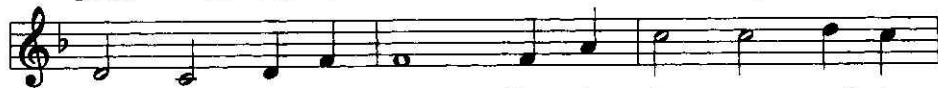
2128 Come and Find the Quiet Center



1. Come and find the qui - et cen - ter in the crowd - ed life we
2. Si - lence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the
3. In the Spir - it let us trav - el, o - pen to each oth - er's



lead, find the room for hope to en - ter, find the
 pace, God it is who speaks and names us, knows our
 pain, let our loves and fears un - rav - el, cel - e -



frame where we are freed: Clear the cha - os and the
 be - ing, touch - es base, mak - ing space with - in our
 brate the space we gain: There's a place for deep - est



clut - ter, clear our eyes that we can see all the
 think - ing, lift - ing shades to show the sun, rais - ing
 dream - ing, there's a time for heart to care, in the



things that real - ly mat - ter, be at peace, and sim - ply be.
 cour - age when we're shrink - ing, find - ing scope for faith be - gun.
 Spir - it's live - ly schem - ing there is al - ways room to spare.

WORDS: Shirley Erena Murray

MUSIC: Attr. to B. F. White

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BEACH SPRING

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