

Lent is a time for reflection; a time to pare down our lives to focus on the most important aspects of who we are and where God is leading us. The metaphor of emptying ourselves, cleansing or being "shriven" as Lent approaches (as in Shrove Tuesday, or Fat Tuesday...one last feast before it begins) helps us to prepare for this season of contemplation and renewal of focus.

**Listening devices for the hearing impaired and large print bulletins are available.** An usher or deacon would be happy to assist you with these.

# United Church of Christ Norwell



<p><b>United Church of Christ Norwell</b>  <i>We are a Christ-centered inclusive community called to ministry.</i>                  P. O. Box 501, 460 Main Street, Norwell, MA 02061   (781) 659-2887  <a href="http://www.uccnorwell.org">www.uccnorwell.org</a>   email: <a href="mailto:office@uccnorwell.org">office@uccnorwell.org</a></p>		
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February 14, 2024  
7:30 p.m.

# United Church of Christ Norwell

*An Open and Affirming Church*

**Ash Wednesday Service**

Matthew 6:17 "But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face."

Prelude *Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee* *ST. AGNES;*  
Karen Harvey, organ Arr. Eleanor Whitsett

Welcome and Call to Worship (Responsive) Rev. Leanne Walt

We come to You, Lord,  
in the restfulness of a day's end,  
in the quiet of the evening.

**We come for acceptance and community.  
We come for forgiveness and love.**

We come, Lord,  
seeking the way, the truth, and the light.  
We come for the path we can't always find,  
for the life we are too fearful to have,  
for the peace the world cannot give.

**We come to be renewed, restored, and re-created  
through the fullness of Your life in Christ.**

\* Hymn #636 *Abide with Me* v. 1, 3 *EVENTIDE*

Prayer of Preparation Doug Holley

Merciful God,  
You call us into being from the dust of the earth;  
You claim us as Your very own in the waters of baptism.  
Look upon us as we enter these forty days bearing the mark of Christ.  
Bless our journey through the desert of Lent to the tomb of resurrection.  
May our fasting be hunger for justice;  
our offerings, a making of peace;  
our prayers, the songs of humble and thankful hearts.  
All that we do and pray is in the name of Jesus,  
for in His cross You proclaim Your love  
for ever and ever. Amen.

**A note for online viewers:**  
This Order of Worship is  
printed double-sided with a  
center page. Therefore,  
scroll down for pages 2-3,  
and back up for page 4.

Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison)

**Dear God, by coming to Your table we receive more gifts than we deserve. We give thanks for Jesus Christ, through whom we receive life and strength for the journey. Renew us so we may eagerly serve as Christ served. Amen.**

\*Hymn #612 *O Jesus, I Have Promised* v. 1, 4 *ANGEL'S STORY*

\*Benediction

Postlude (seated) *May the Mind of Christ My Savior* *ST. LEONARDS;*  
Karen Harvey, organ Arr. Jack Schrader

\* standing to praise God

About this Evening's Service

This service walks through Matthew chapters three through six, which introduce us to the baptism of Christ and the inauguration of His public ministry, the temptations of Christ in the wilderness and much of His teaching on the Mount. They remind us of the steadfast life of Jesus and the Gospel simplicity with which He calls His followers to live. In the midst of these readings we confess our broken spirits, our remorseful hearts, our empty words and promises and our need for the cleansing and renewal of baptism. We sing with faith and we sing with hope that all is rooted in the faith and obedience of Christ. We go from the service renewed in our Gospel hope and our desire to follow Christ in all things.

Anointing with Oil: Explanation and Practice

Instead of ashes, we will anoint with oil this Ash Wednesday, a Biblical practice that has a deep history. Anointing with oil was a common practice in the Ancient Near East. Oil was used in lieu of water in this arid region of the world to provide cleansing, protection for the skin, a hedge against body odor and a visual expression of health and vitality. The oil represented the blessing of harvest (olive oil) in addition to being mixed with herbs and minerals that gave off a pleasant aroma.

Anointing is a powerful reminder of the cleansing, healing and life-giving nature of God's love.

Reading *The Baptism of Jesus, Jesus Tempted in the Wilderness* Jane Nelson  
Matthew 3:13-4:11

Reading *The Beatitudes* JD Murray  
Matthew 5:1-12, 38-48

Reading *On Prayer and Fasting* Rev. Leanne Walt  
Matthew 6:1-18

Pastoral Meditation *The Journey of Love* Rev. Leanne Walt

Anthem *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say* Richard Horn  
Sanctuary Choir

Holy Communion and Anointing  
Invitation

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

**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 our whole 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, Lord.**

*~ Litany of Penitence from the Book of Common Prayer*

Words of Institution

Prayer of Consecration

Sharing the Elements and Anointing

*As you are able, you are invited to come forward to receive communion at the station closest to your seat. You will be offered a piece of bread, symbolizing the body of Christ, and may dip it into the chalice held by the server. If you are not able to come forward to receive communion, please remain seated and a deacon or pastor will serve you in your seat.*

*Anointing is not a sacrament. Like foot washing, it is an optional practice for the church. If you wish to forgo the anointing, you may receive communion and return to your seat.*

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## A Brief Explanation of Ash Wednesday and the Season of Lent

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. By the fourth century the Western church determined that the Lenten period of fasting and renewal should correspond to Christ's forty-day fast (Matt. 4:2), and, by counting forty days back from Easter (excluding Sundays, which remain "Feast" and Resurrection Celebration days), arrived at the Wednesday seven weeks before Easter. At one time Lent was primarily viewed as a period during which converts prepared for baptism on Easter Sunday, but later the season became a general time of penitence and renewal for all Christians. Thus, Ash Wednesday became the day that marked the beginning of the Lenten renewal.

*The aim of Ash Wednesday worship is threefold:*

*to meditate on our mortality, sinfulness, and need of a savior;  
to renew our commitment to daily repentance in the Lenten season  
and in all of life;*

*and to remember with confidence and gratitude that Christ has  
conquered death and sin.*

Ash Wednesday worship, then, is filled with gospel truth. It is a witness to the power and beauty of our union with Christ and to the daily dying and rising with Christ that this entails.

*~Excepted from The Worship Sourcebook*

**Please join us for the following:**

**Lenten Musical Meditations | Wednesdays**

February 21 – March 27 | 12:30-1pm

**Palm Sunday Worship**

March 24 | 10am

**Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service**

March 28 | 7pm

**Easter Sunday Worship**

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