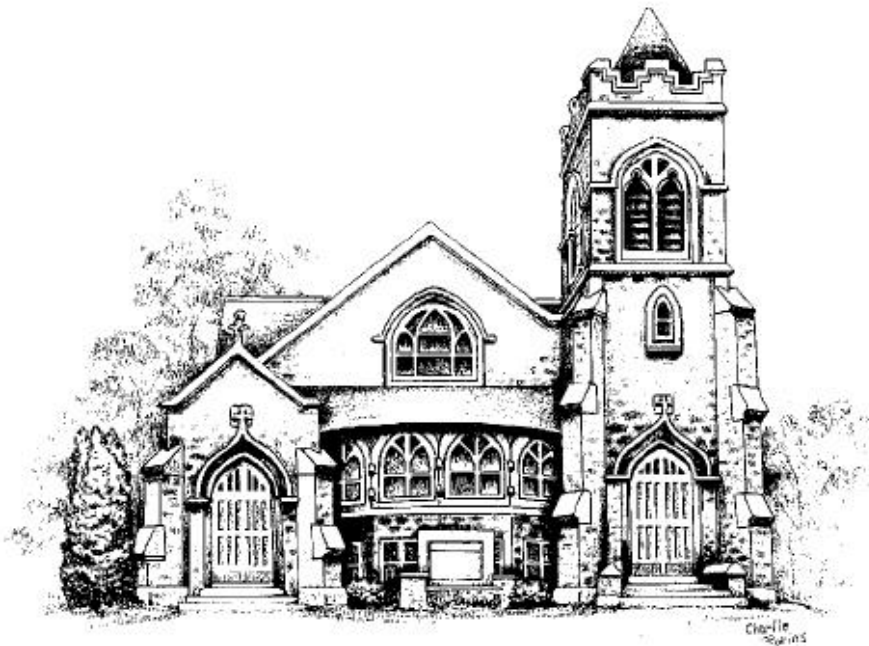


Blackstone Valley
United Methodist Church



61 Linwood Avenue
Whitinsville, MA 01588
508-234-2275

Ash Wednesday
March 9, 2011 7:00 PM

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Opening Song "Lord, I Want To Be A Christian" #402

Lighting of the Altar Candles

Call to Worship

L: The Lord be with you.

P: *And also with you.*

L: Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the Gospel." He also said: "I have come that you might have life, and have that abundantly."

P: *We come before God this night, Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, to hear God's word, to confess our sins, and to ask God to strengthen us in our faith that we might live more holy lives.*

L: Let us pray.

P: *Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, lamenting our sins and acknowledging our brokenness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen*

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Hebrew Scripture Isaiah 58:3-12

Response to the Word

L: In faith, let us respond to God's word together.

P: *We believe in God; therefore we know we are not God.*

L: We believe in Jesus Christ.

P: *Therefore we can see the difference between God made flesh and the reality of our own lives.*

L: We believe in the Holy Spirit.

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P: *Therefore we know, all too well, the distances between ourselves and truth.*

L: The word rings down the ages towards us.

All: *The word is among us. We will hold silence before its call to us.*

(A silence is kept.)

Hymn *“Come Away With Me”* **#2202**

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Gospel Reading *Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21*

Response to the Word

L: Let us enter the journey of Lent, people who stand among others as truly human – no better, no worse, simply offered the grace of God as we go. We remember some moments of courage and faithfulness, the times when we cheered on the good in life, like the laying of palm branches for the journey of Jesus Christ.

All: *Then we remember how we turned our faces away, in doubt and fear, in failure and weakness, and the palm branches of our better moments become as ashes.*

L: As we enter the time of Lent, we will stay in humble silence with our own humanness. Let us name who we are before our God.

All: *We will stay this day with our own humanness, for we are born of the earth and will one day return to it. We know who we are. We are not God.*

L: Receiving the mark of our humanness, I invite those who wish to do so, to come forward and receive the mark of the ashes on your forehead or hand, the mark which bears witness to your preparedness to own that you are an ordinary human being.

(A Silence is kept while ashes are distributed.)

Hymn *“Open Our Eyes”* **#2086**

Psalter *Psalms 51:1–17* **#785, Response 1**

Response to the Word

L: God will, indeed, restore us to the joy of our salvation, washing us clean in the gentleness of grace. I invite you who bear the mark of the ashes to wipe away the sign of your human failures and to begin the time of Lenten reflection in freedom and hope.

Anthem *“Give Us Clean Hands”* *by Charlie Hall*

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Prayer

You have created a clean heart in us, O God, and washed us thoroughly. You have put a new and right spirit in us. As we make our Lenten journey, sustain this willing spirit within us. As we journey from the ashes of repentance to the wonder of resurrection, restore to us the joy of your salvation. Amen.

Sharing the Bread and Cup **pg 14**

Let us share the bread which is our nourishment for the journey. It is broken that we may live in fullness and wholeness.

(A silence is kept.)

The Sending Forth

L: Go forth into the period of Lent as the humble people of God. And may the ashes of our grieving become the soil for our growing, and may the footsteps of the Christ be seen in the earth before us and the Spirit be found beside us on the way.

All: **Amen.**

Closing Song *“Spirit Song”* **#347**

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