



**NEW MILFORD
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH**



Ash Wednesday Service | 02.17.2021 | 7:00pm



* **The order of service is** subject to change at the leading of **the Holy Spirit.**

Italicized Bold print invites congregational response in unison.

† Means you are **invited to stand or lift your hands** if able and comfortable.

Please invite your friends to join our worship services on Facebook & share our livestream.

Welcome *Why We Observe Ash Wednesday*

Pastor Sophy Gamber

Call to Worship

**Members of the NMUMC
Wednesday Night Bible Study**

Turn away from the calls of wealth and power and worldly success.

Repent, and turn back to God.

Turn away from the social injustices that do such deep harm.

Repent, and turn back to God.

Turn away from greed and self-centeredness and self-hate.

Repent, and turn back to God.

As we enter Lent, may we turn back to our God who is Love.

May we seek forgiveness,

may we seek healing,

may we seek wholeness.

May our hearts be renewed in this time of worship.

Hymn *Bless The Lord My Soul (TFWS 2013)*

Bless the Lord my soul, and bless God's holy name.

Bless the Lord my soul, who leads me into life.

Prayer of Confession *Adapted from Psalm 51:1-17*

**Pastor Mel Kawakami +
Pastor Sophy**

Let's join our hearts and our voices in this prayer of confession.

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;

**according to your abundant mercy
forgive me and help me to forgive.**

Wash me thoroughly from shame and doubt
and cleanse me from the moments when I failed
to be loving, or to do justice, or to resist oppression.

**For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.**

Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight.
I admit I am imperfect and easily tempted by evil.

**But you desire truth in our inward being;
so therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be brighter than snow.

**Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that have been crushed rejoice.**

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

**Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.**

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

**You are the One who leads me into life,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.**

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

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

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a heart broken open by love;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

A Moment of Silent Confession and Reflection

Assurance of Pardon

Beloveds, hear this good news:
in the name of Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
Glory to God. Amen.

Hymn *I Could Sing of Your Love Forever*

Words + Music by Martin Smith
Performed by CAYA of Simsbury UMC

Verse: Over the rivers and the sea, Your river runs with love for me
and I will open up my heart and let the Healer set me free.
I am happy to be in the truth and I will daily lift my hands
for I will always sing of when Your love came down.

Refrain: I could sing of Your love forever.

Verse 1 repeats.

Refrain: I could sing of Your love forever.

Bridge: Everywhere I go I'm singing;
Every breath of air I'm breathing;
Everywhere I look I'll sing of when Your love came down.

Verse 1 repeats.

Gospel Lesson*Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21***Pastor Mel**

"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Parent 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 Parent 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 God who is in secret; and your God who sees in secret will reward you.

16 "And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. **17** But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, **18** so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your God who is in secret; and your God who sees in secret will reward you.

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; **20** but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Listening for God's Message*"Restore Me To Joy"***Pastor Sophy****Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline****Pastor Mel + Pastor Sophy**

Dear siblings in Christ:
the early Christians observed with great devotion
the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection,
and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration
there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism.
It was also a time when people who had committed serious sins
and had separated themselves from the community of faith
were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness,
and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way the whole congregation was reminded
of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ
and the need we all have to renew our faith and our commitment
to loving and just relationships with God and one another.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent:
by self-examination and repentance; by prayer and fasting;
and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.
To make a right beginning of repentance,
and as a mark of our mortal nature,
let us now contemplate a sign of our Creator and Redeemer.

Thanksgiving Over the Ashes

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.

Grant that the ashes we have received
 or this sign that we are about to make
 may be to us a sign of our mortality
 and our need to seek forgiveness and to forgive,
 so that we may remember that it is by your gracious love
 that we are given everlasting life;
 through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

The Imposition of Ashes

*If you received ashes in person,
 you are invited to retrace the sign of the cross on your hand.*

*If you did not receive ashes in person,
 you are invited to trace a cross on your hand or forehead with your finger.*

As you make these signs, speak these words:
“Remember we are dust, and to dust we shall all return.”

Hymn *Bless The Lord My Soul (TFWS 2013)*

Bless the Lord my soul, and bless God's holy name.
 Bless the Lord my soul, who leads me into life.

Benediction

Pastor Sophy

Note: Deep gratitude to our volunteers and staff members who make our worship online and in person possible, and to our congregants whose continued efforts help to keep our community safe from Covid19. We lift up deep gratitude for the collaboration involved in making this worship service happen for the glory of God and the delight of Creation!

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Ministers: All members of the New Milford UMC

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