

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MONTPELIER, VT

Ash Wednesday Service

February 17, 2021 5PM

"Shattered"

ASH WEDNESDAY MEDITATION

Soaring

Chuck Bell Music

WELCOME

THRESHOLD

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

[one] : We will be living with stories of Jesus' healing in the Gospel of Matthew in this Lent season. We will see how Jesus encouraged people to open up about their lives as part of the healing process—no matter how broken.

Ash Wednesday developed as a doorway to speaking the truth of our lives, a time to lay the brokenness of life before God.

Let us pray:

[all] : Merciful God, we have lived a year of Lent.

In the midst of it all we have seen love shine through at times
but as we look back in this moment,
it feels like a year of shattered dreams and shattered peace.

We are discouraged. Even though so much feels out of our control,
we also see the ways our own faults and failures
to love each other fully, to care for the least, to honor your creation,
to stand for what is right and good, have contributed to the shattering.

And so we come to you in pieces.

Fragments, broken shells of our past selves.

As we walk along the shores of Uncertainty and Pain,
we ask that you meet us here.

Help us, Healer. Show us our strength. Forgive our inertia.

Move us to move one step at a time toward greater care.

In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning for wholeness.

Silence

Holy Vessels

Threshold Song - WDS Lenten Series

MUSIC: Chuck Bell
WORDS: Marcia McFee

Musical score for 'Holy Vessels' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. The melody is written on a five-line staff. The lyrics are: 'Ves - sels, hol-y and whole. Bro - ken, need-ing the One'. The second staff begins with a measure rest marked '5'. The melody continues with the lyrics: 'O - pen, bod - y and soul Heal - er, come.' The piece ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The instruction 'Repeat As Needed' is written above the final measure.

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ASSURANCE

[one] : Throughout the season of Lent, we will be contemplating the symbol of broken glass—sea (or beach) glass to be specific. An unknown author has said this about the glass fragments that are collected on various shores:

“Ordinary pieces of tableware or beer or soda bottles are flung into the ocean. Years pass, or decades, and then one day, there it is upon the shore: a small shard from one of those long ago discarded objects. Shifting currents have rounded its edges; abrasion has polished its surface; exposure to the sun has altered its hue. And so, when we happen upon it, here amidst the shells and seaweed, we can’t help but laugh with joy at what seems a miracle: this ordinary fragment of silica that time and adversity have transformed into something beautiful.”

Time and adversity... making something beautiful out of that which, once seen as ordinary and broken, is now considered a transformed and precious piece. This is the journey we undertake.

Jesus attended to those considered ordinary, broken, even those deemed unworthy. No matter what, Jesus is the lover of our souls.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

[all] : **In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
Glory to God. Amen.**

AN ANCIENT WORD

Matthew 11: 28-30

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

SERMON

Pastor Yunki Kim

RITUAL ACTION

[one] : Ash Wednesday, as the beginning of Lent, developed in the 5th - 6th centuries, and was mandated in the 11th century. Although Protestants did not maintain this ritual for the most part, it has come back during the 20th century liturgical movement as an important time for reflection in which we reclaimed this symbol and ritual of our spiritual ancestors. It plays an important role in helping us make meaning in the brokenness of our lives. This year, indeed, we are aware of the fragility of life. Even though we cannot share ashes in the ways we have become accustomed, let us engage in a ritual that draws us close to the elements of creation—earth, fire, air, and water. Let it remind us that we are a part of creation, in all its beauty and its brokenness.

EARTH - The sand upon which our symbol of beach glass washes is, interestingly, the origins of glass-making. Glass is liquified, heated sand. In a way, the shards of beach glass are the epitome of “dust to dust” ... or in this case, “sand to liquified sand.” To take it back even further, sand is created by the erosion of mountains and rocks over thousands or millions of years. So whether what you have on hand today is dirt or sand, we are witnessing the brokenness and erosion and weathering of the earth itself. All things become broken. All things transform. And every form we take is holy, whole, and beautiful. I invite you to touch the sand or dirt you have with you in this moment. Feel its grains, it’s decomposed nature, as we pray:

[all] : Holy Creator God... as we feel this elemental part of who we are, we remember that we ourselves were made from the dust of the earth. To experience brokenness is the way of creation, it is not something to be ashamed of... it is the order of things. Transform us, O God. Help us recover the beauty of who we are and see the goodness in transformation.

[one] : FIRE - Glass can only be created when the sand is met with the heat of fire. No wonder the scriptures and poets throughout the ages have spoken of a “refining fire.” The heat of fire is always destructive, but with intention and care and tending, what transpires from the destruction of fire can be a new form with purposes that are good, useful, and beautiful. I invite you to light your candle, if it is not already lit. Gaze upon the colors of the flame which may be white or gold or red or blue, as we pray:

[all] : Holy Refining Fire of the Spirit... as we feel this elemental part of who we are, we remember that you invite us to fuel the flames of passionate love for you and for each other. Do not allow the flame of our spirits to lie dormant. Offer us your

light and life. Transform us, O God. Help us recover the beauty of who we are and see the goodness in transformation.

[one] : AIR - The scriptures depict the creation of human beings as having Holy Breath blown to animate our being. Glass vessels gained a new technique around the time of Jesus. In the first century BCE, glass blowing was invented, offering a way for molten glass to be shaped by blowing through a tube, creating an air bubble, a glass vessel, ready to for practical or artistic purposes. Breath is part of the creation of our Holy Vessels. Breath is with us in our very first cry and will be the final song as we exit this realm. I invite you to close your eyes, if this is comfortable for you, and become aware of your breath as we pray:

[all] : Holy Giver of Breath and Life... as we feel this elemental part of who we are, we remember that this ongoing, life-giving, usually-automatic, moment-to-moment function can be an act of gratitude for our very origins. And this is the core of our relationship with the creation—sharing and existing within this atmosphere. Just as our breath offers us opportunity to let go of that which we do not need in order to take in the fresh air we need, transform us, O God. Help us recover the beauty of who we are and see the goodness in transformation.

[one] : WATER - As the water meets the sand and earth at the shoreline, we also are invited to a journey of meeting the Living Water that Christ offers us. Ancient peoples made wet soil in many forms as healing balms. Skin moistened, blood flow increased to the area, muscles relaxed. This still is practiced today in many places. Our Lent series about healing, then, gives us an opportunity to use this as our Ash Wednesday ritual of anointing. I invite you to mix a little water with the dirt or sand that you have with you and create a wet mixture. Then place some in your palm—the same palm used in greeting other palms, signifying interdependent relationship.

Gently rub it, making the sign of the cross, (**Alternative option: draw a sign of cross on a piece of paper using a pencil*) as we pray:

[all] : Healing Presence... as we feel this elemental part of who we are, we remember you created us, shaped us from dust in the palm of your hand.

Some day we will return to dust,

return to the palm of your hand once again, held and loved forever.

We lament in this moment the grittiness of life,

the need for healing, the difficult and necessary process of transformation.

Mark us as your own, remold us again and again as your people. Let the

recognition of our own need break us open yet again for the sake of others, for the sake of the world. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Give to the Winds Thy Fears

UMH 129

1. Give to the winds thy fears;
hope and be undismayed.
God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head.
2. Through waves and clouds and storms,
God gently clears the way;
wait thou God's time; so shall this night
soon end in joyous day.
3. Leave to God's sovereign sway
to choose and to command;
so shalt thou, wondering, own that way,
how wise, how strong this hand.
4. Let us in life, in death,
thy steadfast truth declare,
and publish with our latest breath
thy love and guardian care.

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastor Yunki Kim

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* "Soaring" Ash Wednesday Meditation by Chuck Bell www.chuckbellmusic.com

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