

Ash Wednesday
March 5, 2025 • 7:00 PM



**Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.**



SAINT JAMES
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CREATION JUSTICE • JUST PEACE • OPEN AND AFFIRMING

Founded in 1853

Rev. Paul Werner, Pastor
Ciaran Krueger, Music Director
Christy Schrecengost, Church Administrator
Jonathan Rizzo, Accompanist

Bluesky
Facebook
Instagram
Threads

@hamburgucc

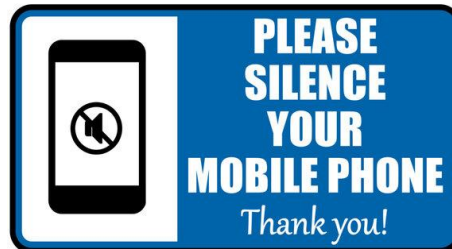


hamburgucc.org

Ash Wednesday

March 5, 2025 • 7:00 PM

Liturgist: Susan Hulbert



“Nothing great is ever achieved without much enduring.”
St. Catherine of Siena

“Have patience with all things, but first of all with yourself.”
St. Francis de Sales

“Lent is a call to renew a commitment grown dull, perhaps,
by a life more marked by routine than by reflection.”
Sister Joan Chittister

“Ash Wednesday is full of joy.... The real sorrow is the illusion that of
ourselves we are anything but dust.”
Thomas Merton

“Lent — remembering to live life graciously; that is, with grace.”
Sister Marcelline Koch

Congregation: Bold print
*Please rise in body or in spirit.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the land upon which St. James UCC stands was originally the ancestral and unceded territory of the Haudenosaunee and Erie people. We celebrate and honor the contributions that Native Americans have made in the past and continue to make today in the Western New York area and the Americas. We embrace the Haudenosaunee philosophy that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. Additionally, we commit to supporting initiatives that empower the local, national, and international indigenous communities and to listening, learning, and taking actions to address injustices past and present that have impacted these communities and all God's creation.

WORDS OF WELCOME

Welcome to St. James, an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, where we strive to be more fully the body of Christ. We are committed to welcoming and celebrating all people and the uniqueness we each bring. As people of faith, we boldly proclaim: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

ANTHEM

"Ashes"

Tom Conry, arr. Joneas

SONG OF HEALING

"Give Me a Clean Heart"

NCH 188



“Letting Go and Letting Come” by Josh Scott (*adapted*)

One: God, our source and ground of being, in you we live, move, and exist. In your image we have been made. You celebrate the goodness of our humanity, and you call us to live fully and love deeply. Yet today, we confess that, in many ways, we choose to live beneath our good humanness. In things we have done and things we have left undone, we have neglected our calling to be your image-bearers to all of creation.

Many: We confess, O God.

One: We have dehumanized others by refusing to love them, by gossiping about them, and by making fun of them.

Many: We confess, O God.

One: We have dug our heels into us-versus-them thinking that makes it easy to condemn entire groups of people that we do not know.

Many: We confess, O God.

One: We have been reactionary, allowing fear to control us and dictate our actions.

Many: We confess, O God.

One: We have sought an eye for an eye, instead of loving our enemies.

Many: We confess, O God.

One: We have closed our ears to the cries of the poor and oppressed. We have turned our backs on the immigrant, the refugee, the orphan, and the widow among us.

Many: We confess, O God.

One: We have been greedy, and in our lust for more we have closed our eyes to all the opportunities to share out of our abundance with the hungry, the naked, and the stranger who are in need.

Many: We confess, O God.

One: We have failed to steward creation responsibly, thinking only of ourselves and not of future generations, or the one who gifted us such a beautiful world.

Many: We confess, O God.

One: And in the process, we have dehumanized ourselves. We have willingly defined ourselves as consumers, and taken our identity and worth from how much money we have or what we possess, instead of grounding our identity in our calling to be image-bearers.

Many: We confess, O God.

One: Give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts that are open.

Many: Let it be, O God.

One: May we live into the fulness of our humanity, the humanity that you called “good.”

Many: Let it be, O God.

(continued on the next page) →

One: May we live with hands open in generosity toward you, O God, and to our neighbors — and even to our enemies.
Many: Let it be, O God.
One: May we steward the earth, and our brief lives here, with gratitude and care.
Many: Let it be, O God.
One: May we turn our hearts to the music of the Spirit, following her lead as we take the next right step on our journey.
Many: Let it be, O God.
One: May we practice resurrection, here and now.
Many: Let it be, O God.
One: May we experience the full and abundant life, to which Jesus invites us, here and now.
Many: Amen.

***RESPONSE**

“Dust and Ashes Touch Our Face” (*Verse 1*)

NCH 186

*Dust and ashes touch our face,
mark our failure and our falling.
Holy Spirit, come, walk with us tomorrow,
take us as disciples,
washed and wakened by your calling.
Take us by the hand and lead us,
lead us through the desert sands,
bring us living water,
Holy Spirit, come.*

BLESSING OF THE ASHES

Rev. Paul Werner

“Blessing the Dust” by Jan Richardson

INVITATION TO LENT

Susan

Ash Wednesday invites us to come back to earth.
To wonder at the gift of life — my life, your life, our life
with the earth — the shared body of our existence.
These ashes were once trees and shrubs,
and places where life was lived to its fullest.
Once they were full of life.
Now they are black and gray. Dry. Lifeless.
But mixed with oil and the water of our baptism

(continued on the next page) →

they make good fertilizer:
It will help the seeds of the gospel take deeper root in us
and bring forth the fruits —
the harvest of justice, peace, and generosity.
These are ashes worth wearing.
May we accept this gift. And know our blessedness.
Be assured that we will be different at the end of this season.
For from the burnt ashes will spring the green shoot of life
and the purple flower of attentiveness to God.

MEDITATION ON PSALM 51:1-17

Rev. Paul

“ASH WEDNESDAY” by Rev. Heidi Carrington Heath

Rev. Paul

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*You are invited to remain seated to reflect on your upcoming Lenten spiritual journey.
What does it mean to have a clean heart?
How do you feel, knowing that you are made of God’s beloved dust?*

When you are ready, please approach the pastor for ashes.

*Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
Remember the remarkable things that God does with dust.*

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

One: Come, as we embark on the dawn of this new season. Come, as we reflect upon the dusk of our lives. Come, as we set aside our distractions and the concerns of our minds.

One: God of light and dust be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Let us open wide our hearts.

Many: We open them up to our God.

One: Let us give thanks to God our creator.

Many: Even in the midst of the wilderness, we give God our praise.

PRAYER OF COMMUNION

Here and now, we give thanks for the steadfast love of God that we see reflected in Jesus the Christ. We are grateful for one another and for all the saints who have come to the table throughout history and for those who will gather here after we have returned to dust. We give thanks for the hands that have harvested the grapes and grains before us. In a spirit of active thanksgiving, we commit ourselves as servants to God’s children, finding new ways of bringing justice, peace, righteousness, and love to the shadows of the earth. Amen.

WORDS OF COMMUNION

One: As Jesus continued on his journey, he could see that his time was drawing nearer. Our Christ knew that his love and ministry would take him to the cross. And as the final night was upon him, he drew close to his friends. To embrace the love he had with them, he shared one last table.

One: Jesus embraced the bread in his weathered hands.

Many: He broke it and gave it to his friends, asking them to remember him.

One: Jesus clasped the cup containing the fruit of the vine.

Many: He gave thanks one last time and asked them to remember him.

One: This is the bread of life. This is the cup of the new covenant. Both given to us. Both we partake in together as we remember our servant-leader Jesus the Christ.

WORDS OF BLESSING

Many: May the Spirit come upon these elements. May the Spirit fill our hearts with love, kindness, and acceptance. May the Spirit continue to empower us as we walk through these forty days in the wilderness, as we face the sadness of the crucifixion and as we wait for Christ’s resurrection.

One: These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are made ready.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

We receive communion by the ancient rite of intinction:

1. Please come forward by the center aisle.
2. Approach the Pastor and take a piece of communion bread.
3. Go to the Communion Assistant and slightly dip your bread in the chalice, while avoiding touching the contents with your fingers.
4. After dipping your bread in the chalice, receive (consume) the elements. You need not wait to return to your seat to partake in communion.
5. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.

All are welcome at God's table. No one is turned away. You do not have to be baptized or be a member of this or any church to partake in this meal. We invite you to receive these gifts of life and blessing given freely by a compassionate God.

A gluten-free bread option is available. The chalice contains grape juice rather than wine. (Sealed pre-filled plastic cups are available for those who may prefer them.)

We will bring the communion elements to those who wish to remain seated.

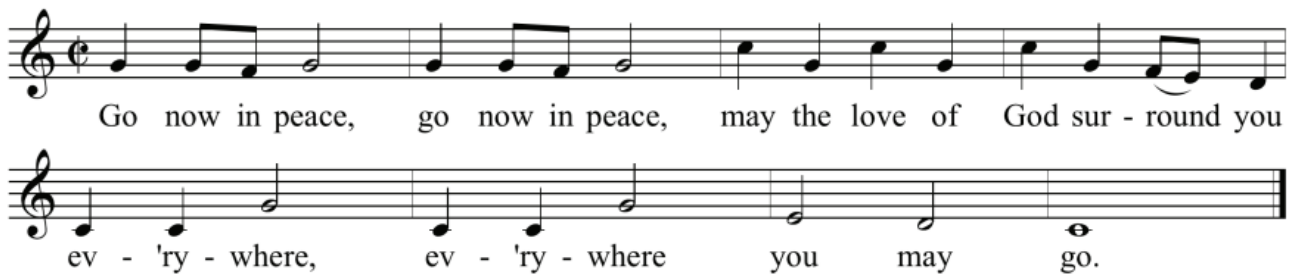
WORDS OF THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

Even as we come to the table tonight remembering our frailty with the dust on our heads, we also give God our thanks for this meal. We give our gratitude that we have come together as one Body of Christ. In these next forty days and as we walk the road to the crucifixion, continue to keep us awake to the ways we can bring Jesus the Christ's servant-leadership to our world. Amen.

BLESSING SONG *(sing three times)*

"Go Now in Peace"

Natalie Sleeth



Go now in peace, go now in peace, may the love of God sur - round you
ev - 'ry - where, ev - 'ry - where you may go.

ONE LICENSE A-723905

POSTLUDE

Join us for Sunday worship at 10:00 AM.

**No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you're welcome here.**

Give me a clean heart so I may serve you.

The first system of music features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower two staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with chords.

God, fix my heart so that I may be used by you.

The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The vocal line has a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note G4. The piano accompaniment features more complex chordal textures in the treble and a consistent bass line.

For I'm not worthy of all these blessings.

The third system shows the vocal line with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note G4. The piano accompaniment continues with its characteristic harmonic support.

Give me a clean heart and I'll follow you.

The final system concludes the piece. The vocal line has a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note G4. The piano accompaniment ends with a final chord and a fermata over the final note.

Unison

1 Dust and ash - es touch our face, mark our fail - ure and our
 2 Dust and ash - es soil our hands— greed of mar - ket, pride of
 3 Dust and ash - es choke our tongue in the waste-land of de -

fall - ing. Ho-ly Spir-it, come, walk with us to - mor-row,
 na - tion. Ho-ly Spir-it, come, walk with us to - mor-row
 pres - sion. Ho-ly Spir-it, come, walk with us to - mor-row

take us as dis - ci - ples, washed and wak-ened by your call - ing.
 as we pray and strug-ple through the mesh-es of op - pres - sion.
 through all gloom and griev-ing to the paths of res - ur - rec - tion.

Refrain

Take us by the hand and lead us, lead us through the des - ert sands,

bring us liv - ing wa - ter, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.

When at This Table

537

Capo 1: (D) (Bm) (Em) (G) (A)
 Eb Cm Fm Ab Bb

1 When at this ta - ble I re - ceive a bless - ing,
 2 If at this ta - ble I have need . of heal - ing,
 3 If at this ta - ble I for - get the hun - gry,
 4 If at this ta - ble I make ded - i - ca - tion
 5 What faith I have, I bring to join this ta - ble,

(F#m) (Bm) (G) (A)
 Gm Cm Ab Bb

the bro - ken bread, the wine of life for me,
 un - bid - den grief, re - la - tion - ship gone wrong,
 the dis - pos - sessed and war - fare's spread - ing stain,
 to give my life in serv - ing what is good,
 what hope I hold, in Christ is taught and true;

(C) (G) (Am7) (D) (G)
 Db Ab Bbm7 Eb Ab

then let me share the peace with you, my neigh - bor,
 then let me know the hands of God en - fold - ing,
 then let this bread be - come the bread of judg - ment,
 then let my cen - ter be where God in - vites me,
 with broth - ers, sis - ters, I will share the bless - ing,

(A7) (D) (Bm) (Gmaj7) (A7) (D)
 Bb7 Eb Cm Abmaj7 Bb7 Eb

and let the Spir - it set our spir - its free.
 and let la - ment be - come be - liev - ing song.
 this wine the sharp a - ware - ness of that pain.
 and show the words of Je - sus un - der - stood.
 the feast where God is mak - ing all things new.

Welcome to St. James United Church of Christ

- We believe that faith is a matter of heart and mind.
- We believe that taking the Bible seriously does not mean taking it literally.
- We believe that God embraces all people equally.
- We believe that we are called to be nothing less than global citizens.
- We believe that the social expression of love is justice.
- We believe that every generation is called to discover new faith traditions.
- We believe that God continues to speak through the actions and words of people today, just as in times of old.



We are a **Creation Justice** church. In the United Church of Christ, Creation Justice churches are “green” churches committed to caring for creation and recognizing how past and current abuse of this gift has caused suffering and inequity. We commit ourselves to confront current and future detriment to our climate and creation in all dimensions of our congregation’s life and beyond the walls of the church.

We are a **Just Peace** church. In the United Church of Christ, Just Peace churches promote peace with justice (a just peace) as an expression of God’s love. We support peaceful opposition to intolerance, injustice, discrimination, and war, and we seek the ways of justice and peace in order to make a difference in our lives and the lives of all who experience injustice and violence.

We are an **Open and Affirming** church. In the United Church of Christ, Open and Affirming churches covenant to welcome and celebrate people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Likewise, we welcome and celebrate people of every faith experience, race, ethnicity, culture, ability, age, background, viewpoint, and life experience. If you struggle with addiction, are recovering from trauma, or have ever felt the pain of exclusion, you are embraced here.

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you’re welcome here.

To receive our **weekly e-news**, *The St. James Connector*, scan the QR code or go to:
<https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccnews>



For **online giving**, scan the QR code or go to:
<https://www.hamburgucc.org/giving>



St. James United Church of Christ

76 Main Street • Hamburg, NY 14075 • 716-649-6171

Church Office: churchoffice@hamburgucc.org • Pastor: revpaul@hamburgucc.org



We recycle church bulletins! After you are finished using your bulletin, please share it with a friend or neighbor or place it in the recycling bins in the narthex area or in front of the church.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER WITH 100% POST-CONSUMER CONTENT