



# The First Congregational Church

Chappaqua, New York

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Church

All Are Welcome



*Compassion*

A Lenten Meditation Service

March 15, 2023 • 12:00 pm

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Meditative Music

Call to Worship (*responsively*):

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

**All: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**

One: You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

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

Meditative Music

Invitation to Confession:

During this Lenten time we need to take the time to be present with God and with Jesus and allow ourselves to be aware of those things in our hearts that need attention. This Lenten time also allows us the grace to lift up those things that have weighed us down and kept us from drawing closer to God and to each other. Let us now come before God with our confessions, first together and then silently.

A Prayer of Confession (*in unison*):

**Dear Jesus, help us to come before you with contrite hearts; with hearts ready to be open to you and to your will. Help us to become more aware of those things that we have left undone and those ways in which we have not pleased you, and probably have not pleased ourselves either. Help us to discern more fully how you would have us serve you and be open to receiving your love and your forgiveness for those things in our heart that we now lift up to you.**

Time for silent prayer

Words of Assurance:

When we pray for forgiveness from our heart, God hears us and answers us, forgiving us, even as we forgive those who have hurt us.

The Lord's Prayer (in the language and way in which you are accustomed)

Silent Meditation

Scripture Reading: Psalm 51:1-10

Meditative Music

Reflection

Silent Meditation

Meditative Music

Benediction

### **Worship Leaders**

Rev. Dr. Martha Jacobs

Keith Robellard, Minister of Music and Composer of the Meditative Music

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#### *What is Lent Anyway?*

The traditions of Lent are derived from the season's origin as a time when the church prepared candidates, or "catechumens," for their baptism into the Body of Christ. It eventually became a season of preparation not only for catechumens but also for the whole congregation. Self-examination, study, fasting, prayer and works of love are disciplines historically associated with Lent. Conversion – literally, the "turning around" or reorientation of our lives towards God – is the theme of Lent. Both as individuals and as a community, we look inward and reflect on our readiness to follow Jesus in his journey towards the cross.

The season of Lent lasts forty-six days and echoes Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and the journey of Israel from slavery to a new community. Traditionally, fasting, and other spiritual disciplines undertaken during this time period, may be suspended during the six Sundays of Lent in acknowledgement of the weekly celebration of the Resurrection.

On Ash Wednesday, ashes are placed on the foreheads of the congregation as a symbol that we have come from dust and one day will return to dust. It is one of many Lenten and Easter customs that remind us of our historical connection with Jewish tradition.

Most of this time of preparation is symbolized by the color violet, though the season is bracketed by the mourning black of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. As an alternative to Violet, some churches have begun to use brown, beige or gray (the colors of rough unbleached cloth like burlap) to reflect the season's mood of penitence and simplicity. The somber colors are a reminder of the unbleached "sackcloth" worn by mourners and penitents in the Jewish tradition.