



February 18, 2026 7:00 pm
Ash Wednesday



the good news is...

all are invited

~ Welcome Visitors! ~

Guide to the bulletin: An asterisk (*) indicates an invitation to rise in body and/or spirit. Text printed in **BOLD** indicates everyone says them together. **NCH** is the New Century Hymnal next to your pew chair.

GATHERING TOGETHER

Prelude ***What Wondrous Love Is This*** Matt Limbaugh

Welcome and Community Connections

*Introit ***Create in Me a Clean Heart*** Freylinghausen

***Call to Worship¹** (Inspired by Isaiah 58:6-9 NRSVUE)

One: Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke?

¹ **Break Forth: Service Prayers for Ash Wednesday Year A** was written by Rev. Teña T. Nock, who serves as The Associate Pastor of Digital Ministry, First United Church of Tampa, United Church of Christ. Mystic in the making.

All: Is it not sharing our bread with the hungry and bringing the homeless poor into our house when we see the naked, to cover them and not hide ourselves from our own kin?

One: Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of God shall be your rear guard.

All: Then we shall call, and HE will answer. We shall cry for help, and SHE will say, "Here I am."

***Prayer for Transformation and New Life**

Lifter of Our Heads, help us to turn away from hollow thoughts and empty rituals. Let nothing false be found in us. Sustain us in our desire to worship you in spirit and in truth. Help us to see the sacred all around us and in us and to treat each other like the Divine image bearers we are.

***Words of Grace (Inspired by Isaiah 58:11 NRSVue)**

***Hymn** *What Wondrous Love Is This* NCH 223

HEARING THE WORD

Hebrew Scripture Psalm 51: 1-17

Special Music *Psalm 51* Bríghín E Kane-Grade
Refrain (sung by all between verses):
Be merciful, O God, for we have sinned

Reflection

SHARING OUR LIVES

Prayer

Communion and Ritual of Breath and Ashes

Pastor Kris: In a beginning, Spirit formed the human body from dust and then breathed into that body and the human became a living soul... Let us honor the words of Ecclesiastes 12:7 (MSG)

*The body is put back in the same ground it came from.
The spirit returns to God, who first breathed it.*

Pastor Kris: We give thanks for the closeness we have in you and with you O God.

All: You are always as close as our next breath.

Pastor Kris: We marvel at how intentional you were in our design.

All: You crafted us from stars and like stars, bid us to shine

Pastor Kris: We broke forth with you, shining in a beginning.

All: And we will return to you luminously, in the end.

Pastor Kris: Beloved, we gather in this solemn moment, to pause and to reflect.

All: We reflect on the bread that was broken and the cup that was shared. We remember.

Words of Institution (I Corinthians 11:23-26 NRSVUE)

Pastor Kris: On the night Jesus was betrayed, he took a loaf of bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

All: We remember

Pastor Kris: In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood.” Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me”.

All: We remember

Pastor Kris: For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

All: We partake in remembrance

***Sharing of Bread and Cup**

***Marking with Ashes:**

“From dust/stardust you came and to dust/stardust you shall return”

Distribution of Ashes

Signed by Ashes

Keil

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Breath of Life, thank you for bread/body and cup/blood, for breath and dust, and for all that makes you and us, we. Keep us ever flourishing in our becoming. Amen.

GOING OUT TO THE WORLD

***Song for Going Out *Sing Out! We're Made of Common Dust*²**
tune: NCH 531

**Sing out! We're made of common dust;
One day, to dust we shall return!
Yet, God, you've placed your mark on us
And so for you our spirits yearn.**

**This gift of ashes we receive
Reminds us we belong to you.
You call us to repent, believe,
and seek your Way in all we do.**

**The dust and dirt of children's play,
of youthful times, of working years
Are part of life — and life's decay;
We wash the dust with sorrow's tears.**

**We sing, O God, of what you give:
This ash reminds us we are yours.
In life we're claimed, in death we live!
In Christ our life, your love endures.**

***Benediction**

***Postlude**

Lord, Speak to Me

Lani Smith

² Tune: Robert Schumann, 1839 ("Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak") (MIDI)

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https://www.carolynshymns.com/sing_out_were_made_of_common_dust.html

Worship Leaders: Jeff Darwin (Dir. of Music), Bríghín Kane-Grade (Choral Director), Pastor Kris Gorton

Readers: Terry Hoffman and Sonja Short

Communion Preparation: Sonja Short

Media Room: Scott Oebser

Memorial UCC uses photographs and video for social media communication with our members and friends. If someone does not wish to be photographed or in a video, ushers will help them find a seat out of camera view.

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Hearing Loop and Listening Devices: For those who have hearing aids, Memorial UCC has a t-coil compatible hearing loop. Listening devices are also available for people who are hard of hearing. See an usher if you need assistance.

Bathrooms: There are two bathrooms near the main entrance of the church. A third Gender Neutral and Accessible bathroom is in the hallway by the nursery. If you need assistance finding the restrooms, an usher will gladly help you



Giving Options—Ever-Widening Opportunities: Checks can be mailed directly to the church or dropped off during office hours. Please indicate any special designation in the memo line. You can give securely via PayPal with your credit card, debit card, or direct withdrawals. Visit and click the "giving" link in the upper right-hand corner or scan the QR code here. If you are interested in monthly automatic withdrawals, please email Ulrika Swanson at ulrikaswanson@gmail.com, and she will get you signed up.

Want to Know More About Us? Co-pastors Kris and Peter would be happy to set up a time to chat further. Feel free to contact either of them at pastorkris@memorialucc.org or pastorpeter@memorialucc.org. You don't need to be a formal member to get involved here. There is a lot of information on our website at www.memorialucc.org.

What Wondrous Love Is This

John 19:17; Rev. 5:13

19th century, United States; alt.
First published in Mercer's Cluster, 1836

1 What won-drous love is this, O my soul! O my soul! What
 2 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing, to
 3 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and

won-drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is
 God and to the Lamb, I will sing; To God and to the
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing on! And when from death I'm

this! that Christ should come in bliss to bear the heav-y cross for my
 Lamb who is the great I Am, while mil - lions join the theme, I will
 free, I'll sing and joy - ful be, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing

soul, for my soul, to bear the heav-y cross for my soul!
 sing, I will sing; while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing.
 on, I'll sing on, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on!

This anonymous folk hymn, with its modal (dorian) tune, has appeared in many versions. William Walker, compiler of Southern Harmony, one of the most important nineteenth-century tune books in the United States, lived and died in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Tune: WONDRous LOVE 12.9.12.12.9.
 (CHRISTOPHER)
 Appendix to Wm. Walker's Southern Harmony, c. 1843
 Harm. The New Century Hymnal, 1993