

# Dust & Ashes

A Virtual Interactive Ash Wednesday service  
St. John United Church of Christ, Bellevue, KY  
All day on Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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## Here is how this works.

If you would like to participate in the virtual interactive Ash Wednesday service, but are not able to gather the items needed, we will collect the following items and create a packet for you to pick up or be delivered. Call 859.261.2066, ext. 201 by Feb. 10 to reserve an Ash Wednesday packet.

Items needed per person: 1 small bowl of soil; 1 small bowl of water; 1 small candle and matches; ashes; a “My Lenten Permission Slip” (attached) and crayons, markers, construction paper, and other artistic materials you may have at home for your “Alleluia! Page (attached).”

**Welcome, Information & Call to Worship** Keith M. Haithcock, pastor & teacher

**Opening Song** “Let Your Spirit Come” Steve Milloy, service musician

## Dust Station

**Sacred Writing:** Genesis 2.4b-24 (select verses)

Cherie Draper

At the time when Our God made the heavens and the earth, there was still no wild bush on the earth nor had any wild plant sprung up, for Our God had not yet sent rain to the earth, and there was no human being to till the soil. Instead, a flow of water would well up from the ground and irrigate the soil.



So Our God fashioned an earth creature out of the clay of the earth, and blew into its nostrils the breath of life. And the earth creature became a living being.

Our God planted a garden to the east, in Eden—“Land of Pleasure”—and placed in it the earth creature that had been made. Then Our God caused every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, to spring from the soil. In the center of the garden was the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Then Our God took the earth creature and settled it in the garden of Eden so that it might cultivate and care for the land. Our God commanded the earth creature,

“You may eat as much as you like from any of the trees of the garden—  
except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

You must not eat from that tree, for on the day you eat from that tree,  
that is the day you will die—yes, die.”

Then Our God said, “It is not good for the earth creature to be alone. I will make a fitting companion for it.” So from the soil Our God formed all the various wild beasts and all the birds of the air, and brought them to the earth creature to be named. The earth creature gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals.

But none of them proved to be a fitting companion, so Our God made the earth creature fall into a deep sleep, and while it slept, God divided the earth creature in two, then closed up the flesh from its sides. Our God then fashioned the two halves into male and female, and presented them to one another.

When the male realized what had happened, he exclaimed,

“This time, this is the one! Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!

Now, she will be Woman, and I will be Man, because we are of one flesh!

This is why people leave their parents and become bonded to one another, and the two become one flesh.

**You may pause the video for time to do the following action.**

**Action:** Reach your hands into the bowl of dust (soil). Hold the soil in your hands.

Reflect on the substance from which all life comes. Close your eyes and feel the soil, notice its aroma. Breathe deeply and hold your breath, then slowly let your breath go. Reflect on the breath of God, the gift of life that God provides with each breath. Give God thanks for your life and all of creation.

**Singing Together** “Dust and Ashes Touch Our Face” Steve Milloy, vocalist & piano

Dust and ashes touch our face, mark our failure and our falling.

Holy Spirt, 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.

## Water Station

**Sacred Writing:** Luke 3.21-22

Cherie Draper

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.

**You may pause the video to do the following action.**

**Action:** Next is a bowl of water. Dip your hands into the water, feel the water wash over your hands and nourish your skin, and give life. The accompanying sacred writing is from the story of Jesus' baptism. The sacramental ritual of baptism and the essential role water plays in life on earth are all linked. Offer God thanks for life and rebirth in baptism.



**Singing Together** "Dust and Ashes Touch Our Face" Steve Milloy, vocalist & piano  
Dust and ashes soil our hands greed of market, pride of nation.  
Holy Spirit, come, walk with us tomorrow  
as we pray and struggle through the meshes of oppression.  
Take us by the hand and lead us, lead us through the desert sands,  
bring us living water, Holy Spirit, come.

## Light Station

**Sacred Writing:** 1 Corinthians 12.25-26

Cherie Draper

The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.



**You may pause the video to do the following action.**

**Action:** In complete silence, light a candle in memory of loved ones who have died, or for any other intention. Offer prayers for those in need of healing, wholeness, strength, direction, and hope. Be still and know that God is God.

**Singing Together** “Dust and Ashes Touch Our Face” Steve Milloy, vocalist & piano

Dust and ashes choke our tongue in the wasteland of depression.

Holy Spirit, come, walk with us tomorrow

through all gloom and grieving to the paths of resurrection.

Take us by the hand and lead us, lead us through the desert sands,  
bring us living water, Holy Spirit, come.

## Ashes Station

**Sacred Writing:** Genesis 3.19

You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything, until you go back to the soil from which you were formed.

**You were made from dust,  
and you will become dust again.”**

Cherie Draper



**You may pause the video to do the following action.**

**Action:** Typically, we offer ashes from the burnt palms of last year's Palm Sunday, but any ashes will do. Speak out loud that final sentence of the sacred writing three times: "You were made from dust, and you will become dust again." You are invited now to administer ashes to anyone who is with you, or to give yourself ashes if you are alone, with the sign of the cross on the forehead or the back of the hand.

## Cross Station

**Sacred Music** by Steve Milloy as you fill out your "Lenten Permission Slips."

**You may pause the video for more time to do the following action.**

**Action:** Picture the Lenten Cross on the Altar or at the peak of the roof of the Church house. The cross reminds us of the sacrifice, love, and life of Christ. Think of some ways that you can give yourself permission during the season of Lent to draw closer to God. Write those on your Lenten Permission Slip attached. This is a way of thinking about what to do for Lent, not just giving up something or taking on something. Be honest with yourself about what you need to do to draw closer to God. A list of suggestions is on the permission slip. Take some time to think of ways to give yourself permission to draw closer to God. Post your permission slip where you will see it as a reminder.



## The Final Station

Sacred Music by Steve Milloy is offered as you create your “Alleluia!” sheet.

**You may pause the video for more time to do the following action.**

**Action:** You are invited to create a picture incorporating the word “Alleluia!” on the page attached or any piece of paper. Use your artistic imagination, fill the page with drawings, doodles, thoughts, and hopes for Easter. People of all ages are encouraged to contribute their artwork.

Please email a photo of your “Alleluia” as soon as possible but no later than

March 14 to:

[Pastor@StJohnChurch.net](mailto:Pastor@StJohnChurch.net)

or

Pastor Keith Haithcock  
c/o St. John United Church of Christ  
520 Fairfield Avenue  
Bellevue, KY 41075

This year starting on Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday, we will omit singing or saying “Alleluia!” in worship, and keep the practices of self-evaluation, self-observance, and honestly draw closer to God. This is sometimes called burying the Alleluia. Your “Alleluia!” pictures will be kept in the Sanctuary under a purple cloth waiting for Easter Sunday when they will be displayed in the virtual worship service. This is another visual reminder through all of Lent, that there is a promise coming – we cannot quite see it yet, but there is a promise there. The journey with God goes far beyond death and resurrection is always possible, even when it is hard to see.

### **Sung Sacred Writing** Psalm 51.1-12

“Give Me a Clean Heart”

Give me a clean heart so I may serve you. God, fix my heart so that I may be used by you. For I'm not worthy of all these blessings. Give me a clean heart and I'll follow you.

### **Send Out**

Keith M. Haithcock

As you have been blessed with the mark of God's love go now and bless others.

May the God who created you,

the Christ who teaches you,

and the Spirit who empowers you,

be your companion along this Lenten journey. **Amen.**

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