



ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
**LENT WORSHIP @ HOME**  
**HOLY VESSELS: A SEASON OF RECOVERY**

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*Holy Vessels: A Lenten Season of Recovery*  
*Ash Wednesday*  
February 17, 2021

**Prelude**

*Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy, Martha Main*

**Gathering**

*Lenten Anthem: "Holy Vessels"*

*Vessels, holy and whole*  
*Broken, needing the One*  
*Open, body and soul*  
*Healer, come.*

*Leader:* Ash Wednesday is a time of naming brokenness. As we enter the season of Lent, we commit to enter also into a season of healing and recovery that requires the naming of what has been shattered as a first step. We take "the yoke" of responsibility as disciples of Jesus to be the Body of Christ—a body of those who need healing and offer healing in the world. The promise of Jesus is that he is with us in our weariness and burdens.

*Vessels, holy and whole*  
*Broken, needing the One*  
*Open, body and soul*  
*Healer, come.*

## **We Confess Our Sins**

*Leader:* 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: 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*

*Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.*

**Assurance--**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...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. Amen.

## **Hymn**

*What Wondrous Love Is This*, Virtual Choir

## **Contemporary Words to Ponder**

If you cannot speak of your brokenness, your brokenness will speak for you.

— **Peter Rollins**

Beautiful are those whose brokenness gives birth to transformation and wisdom.

— **John Mark Green**

Our life is full of brokenness—broken relationships, broken promises, broken expectations. How can we live with that brokenness without becoming bitter and resentful except by returning again and again to God’s faithful presence in our lives.

— **Henri Nouwen**

## **We Hear God's 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.”

## **Reflection**

*A Broken Treasure*

## **We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving**

**Invitation** – May we give of ourselves as a symbol of our appreciation for receiving the mark of God’s love in such beautiful and meaningful ways. As you have been given the mark of God’s love, may you give in return.+

You can mail your offerings to our office. We check the mail regularly.  
Zion United Church of Christ  
8916 E. Troy Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN 46239

Or, you can donate through our website through our secure PayPal button at [www.zionuccindy.net/donate](http://www.zionuccindy.net/donate). Please know that PayPal receives a 2.2% processing fee and a \$0.30 transaction charge. You are able to set up reoccurring, monthly payments.

**We Give Thanks** – Creator God, may the gifts we offer today be used to share your love with all – in our church, our community, and your world.  
Amen.+

**Song of Preparation**      *Make Us Holy, Make Us Whole, Martha & Michael Main*

*In your love, make us whole.  
May we rest in your compassion.  
Calm the lost, weary soul  
in the warmth of your love.  
May your peace fill our hearts.  
May we know the love of Jesus.  
By your grace, you console.  
Make us holy, make us whole.*

## Prayers of the People

*Leader:* Lover of our souls, you who weeps, bleeds, cries, waits...for us and because of us, we come before you to make our petitions known. Hear our cries for healing of body, mind, and spirit. We know that already you are at work among us, showing us the way to recovery from the toxicities and grief of our time. We pray for those who are shattered by the violence of circumstances, tumbled by the forces of life, and washed up on shores, distant from all that feels whole.

God, in these moments we lift up to you the prayers of our hearts...

*(A time for silent prayer)*

**The Lord's Prayer**--Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

### **Ritual Action: Anointing with Ash**

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.

Many in our congregation received a bag of ashes in their Lent @ Home Kits. Now is the time to open that bag. The dusting of ash will be plenty. If you did not receive one, you are invited to still mark yourself with a cross.

And now, mark yourself or those in your household, with an ashy, dusty sign of the cross and remember...

*From dust you came, and to dust you shall return.*

## **Blessing**

Now go with confidence that, though shattered, we are held. Begin the journey of recovering your depth of love for all and your joy of living in this world. May the words of Jesus ring in your ears: “I will give you rest.” And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver salve to your soul and a spring in your step. Amen.

*Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.*

## **Postlude**

*Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness, Martha Main*

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