RIVERBEND UNITED CHURCH

February 13, 2024

A Service of Ashes

"This is the moment we ask for the blessing that lives within the ancient ashes, that makes its home inside the soil of this sacred earth." –Jan Richardson

Time of Preparation *Gather Us In* MV 7

Invitation to the Lenten Journey

Hymn *Jesus Tempted in the Desert* VU 115

Opening Prayer (Unison) Psalm 51: 10-12, 15

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

Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

Scripture Reading Isaiah 58: 1-12

Reflection Dr. Doug Spaner

Prayer of Confession

For the times when we are too rushed to care,
When we are too tired to bother,
When we don't really listen,
When we act from motives other than love,

God, forgive us.

Silence

For our incapacity to feel the sufferings of others,
and our tendency to live comfortably with injustice,

God, forgive us.

Silence

For our failings in community and connection,
For our lack of compassion and understanding,

God, forgive us.

Silence

For our lack of forgiveness, openness, sensitivity,
And for our inability to receive your grace,

God, forgive us.

Silence

Words of Assurance

Jesus said, "I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly." In the name of Jesus Christ, you and I are forgiven, offered grace each moment. Thanks be to God, Amen.

Invitation to Receiving the Ashes

An Ash Wednesday Blessing *(Jan Richardson)*

So let us be marked for claiming what God
can do within the dust, within the dirt,
within the stuff of which the world is made,
and the stars that blaze in our bones,
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge we bear.

Special Music *You Desire Truth / Teach Me Wisdom (Harding)*
The Ensemble, Sheryl Bowhay, flute

You desire truth in my inward being.
Teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

Receiving the Ashes

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

Hymn *Take O Take Me as I Am* MV 85

Benediction

Postlude

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Tuesday, February 13, 2024
Riverbend United Church