**Bridgewater United Church**

**February 14th, 2024 Ash Wednesday**

**Ministry Team:** *Reverend Neil McEwen and Reverend Hans van Nie*

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*The asterisk (\*) indicates the congregation may stand, as they can.*

*The print in* ***BOLD*** *is where the congregation participates.*

**Gathering**

Welcome and Introduction

**\*Hymn:** “Forty Days and Forty Nights” (VU 114)

Invitation to Confession

Lent is a journey of deepening reflection and renewal,

an opportunity to make new commitments in faith.

We prepare for the journey

by setting aside burdens that would weigh us down.

Let us turn to God and confess our sin.

**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,

our lack of understanding,

**God, forgive us.** *(silence)*

For our lack of forgiveness, openness, sensitivity,

**God, forgive us.** *(silence)*

For the self-righteousness that denies guilt,

and the self-interest that strangles compassion,

**God, forgive us.** *(silence)*

**Word and Response**

Responsive Reading:Psalm 130 (VU 853)

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**Receiving the Sign of the Cross**



*(all are invited to receive the sign of the cross, marked in ashes)*

Know that you are part of God’s holy earth,

one with Christ in brokenness and blessing.

**“Amen.”**

**Words of Assurance**

On the journey through Lent

we seek a spirit of discernment and wisdom.

**On the journey through Lent,**

**we grow in relationship with God.**

Follow Jesus and taste new life.

Seek the Spirit and taste God’s goodness.

**We move toward God and taste grace.**

**We are forgiven!**

Sharing the Peace of Christ

**\*Hymn:** “Dust and Ashes Touch Our Face” (VU 105)

**\*Prayer:** “An Ash Wednesday Prayer” (VU 106)

**Shriving**

­A Prescription for Lent: *(Lenten “Homework”)*

Please spend some time to consider the suggestions on the back cover for writing yourself

a “Lenten prescription” for your spiritual practice during the Lenten season.

***CCLI No., 11287624, 20371363***

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***The church bulletins are presented to the glory of God,***

***and in loving memory of good friend, Dianne Hay,***

***gift of Ron and Jane LeBlanc.***

**A Lenten Prescription**

The rituals of Ash Wednesday belong together with those of Shrove Tuesday.

The word “shrove” comes from the Old English verb “to shrive” which means “to write.”

Traditionally, on Shrove Tuesday, people would come to church to have a Lenten prescription

“shriven” for them. (Note that the word “prescription” derives from the same verb.)

You are invited to write your own Lenten prescription in the space below.

You can then say you were in church and that you “shrove” yourself a prescription for Lent!

In the space below, you can “shrive” some commitments for your spiritual practice during Lent,

such as keeping a journal or daily meditation.

During Lent this year I commit to the following spiritual practice(s):

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Our Lenten focus this year includes:

**Lenten Study: 40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism**

We offer this opportunity to learn and grow in our understanding and faithful response to racism in our church, community and circles of living. If you wish to participate in receiving information about this learning opportunity, please reach out to our Church Office. Daily reflections are available from the United Church of Canada at <https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/anti-racism/40-days-engagement-anti-racism>. We offer to our Communities of Faith this resource from The United Church of Canada but also the opportunity to come together to discuss what we have heard and experienced. Two one-hour learning sessions will be available for your participation. Our in-person discussion group will be alternating between Bridgewater United and West Side United on Wednesdays at 7:00pm starting on February 21st at Bridgewater United and a ZOOM discussion session will be held on Tuesdays at 7:00pm starting on February 20th. These sessions will continue weekly until Wednesday, March 27th. Lenten Study booklets are available in the Narthex.

**Be The Change!**

We value energetic engagement in our:

Spiritual Health, Generosity, Acceptance of all, Responsiveness to the world,

Love for God, creation, self, and others

**#APlaceWhereEveryoneBelongs**

**#ChooseLove**

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Church Office Hours ~ Tuesday to Friday ~ 10:00am – 12:30pm

Be sure to like and share our Facebook and YouTube page!

**Our Church is a Nut-Free and Scent-Free Church**