

# Lent 2022

Volume 13, Issue 1

View more photos from church events via our website: [upcbgm.org/programs-and-events/photo-gallery](https://upcbgm.org/programs-and-events/photo-gallery)

Our worship services are livestreamed on our YouTube channel: [upcbgm.org/youtube](https://upcbgm.org/youtube)

## Lent/Easter Worship Series: "Full to the Brim"

March 6 – April 17

Most of us think of Lent as a time to give things up, dwell on sin, and practice piety. In its origins, Lent was a time for people who were new to the faith to prepare for their baptism on Easter. In essence, this was a practice of stepping away from the rat race, corrupt power, scarcity mentality, and empty rituals, in order to live a more expansive and full life of faith.

This worship series is an invitation — into a radically different Lent, into a full life. It's an invitation to be authentically who you are, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, and to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed. It disrupts the scarcity mentality that capitalism, oppression, or hierarchy can plant inside of us. When we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God's lavish love, that love spills over. It reaches beyond ourselves; like water, it rushes and flows, touching everything in its path.



March 6 — 1st Sunday in Lent, "Even in the Desert".

*Scripture: Luke 4:1-13*

Even in the midst of struggle, oppressive forces, hardship, and grief — God's promises spill over, like the bounty of the first fruits from the ground. Even in the desert, you are called to the riverside to be washed by grace.

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Our mission is to follow Jesus Christ by doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.

*Everyone is welcome here*



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### **March 13 – 2nd Sunday in Lent, “Under God’s Wing”. *Scripture: Luke 13:31-35***

Jesus’s lament for Jerusalem is an image of fierce love and protection. We receive grace upon grace, even if not deserved. No matter how much we try to separate ourselves from God, God will run to protect us. God will gather us in. God’s love for us is fuller than we can imagine.

### **March 20 – 3rd Sunday in Lent, “You Are Worthy”. *Scripture: Luke 13:1-9***

The lesson of the fig tree invites us to unpack the source of our worth in a system and society that often measures worthiness by commerce, production, output, success, status, achievement, ethnicity, and/or gender identity. Like the gardener, you are invited to see others with audacious hope and budding potential.

### **March 27 – 4th Sunday in Lent, “Prodigal Grace”. *Scripture: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32***

The word “prodigal” is commonly used to describe the son who squanders his inheritance. Yet, this parable invites us to consider how God’s grace is also prodigal – extravagant, lavish, illogical. This parable disrupts and expands our definitions of grace. How might you receive and extend prodigal grace?

### **April 3 – 5th Sunday in Lent, “Brazen Acts of Beauty”. *Scripture: John 12:1-8***

Beauty is resistance to death; beauty is an act of love. Faith does not hide; it is not frugal. It is embodied, broken open, and poured out. This isn’t a frugal faith – it is an abundant, extravagant faith.

### **April 10 – Palm/Passion Sunday, “Even the Stones”. *Scripture: Luke 19:28-40***

As we begin our walk through Holy Week, let us ask: What can’t be silenced? What must be said? What things can we not stay quiet about? What is bubbling up that we need to give voice to – faith questions, apologies, issues of justice, truth-telling? As we go deeper into the story, the truth will soon be set free.

### **April 17 – Easter Sunday, “An Expansive Life”. *Scripture: Luke 24:1-12***

When the women find the tomb empty and are stunned by the presence and words of the messengers in dazzling clothing, they remember what Jesus had said. They return to their deepest knowing and allow themselves to receive the expansiveness of resurrection. Their imaginations and hearts expand, and they must take action in response.

How do we carry forth what we have learned this Lent? Can we be curious enough to return and remember? Can we allow ourselves to be filled with expansive hope? Can we trust in the expansive promise of new life, and carry that promise with us wherever we go?

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## **Pastors’ Ponderings**

Friends,

I have been thinking about ritual and ceremony for some time, as anyone who has been listening to or reading my sermons knows. For two years now, things have been in a constant state of upheaval, and the regular, predictable rituals that order our lives have been upset along with everything else. So I keep pondering and exploring the rituals that can help us to stay grounded, in touch with our faith, and open to God’s goodness in the world.

And today I read a blog post by Lila June Johnston, a member of the Santa



*Kimberly P Chastain,  
Pastor*

Clara Pueblo Indigenous Nation, that connected with my thoughts and suggested a possible Lenten practice. I will quote her description of the morning prayer ceremony of her people, and then suggest some things we might use during Lent to explore such a practice for ourselves. I particularly like this ritual because it is not based in the written word, but in encountering the created order and God's presence in it.

"This is what my people do to remind us to remember who we are and what our prayers are each day. Choose a plant, food, stone, or something else that is precious to you and resonant with nature. It could be mugwort or holly or olive, it could be something specific to your land or your ancestors.

"Before you get your day going, look to the east where the sun rises. Put your precious thing down in front of you and offer it to the Earth. Say what your intentions or prayers are for that day. Invite your ancestors to be with you. Invite the good spirits to walk with you, the spirits that want to help.

"Honor who you are and honor the Earth and honor the spirits and the great Creator — or life forces or unknowable mysteries or gods or whatever it is that you believe makes the world more than meets the eye.

"I think of this practice, and ceremony in general, as a kind of string that holds the beads of our life together. If you can do it every day, great, but even once a week or once a month will help you remember. I pray it helps you remember to give your best but also to receive — the sunlight, the birds, the fruit of joy, the fruit of life, the answers to your prayers, whatever they may be."

If you want to try this practice with "precious objects" that coordinate with our Lenten theme, here is a list of suggestions to get you started on thinking about what you might offer in this ceremony each week.

- Week 1: Sand or soil. Hold it in your hand, feel the grains and the textures. Remember that the grains are connected to each other, and hold the water, sunlight, and nutrients to bring about new life. Even in the desert, there is nourishment for life.
- Week 2: A feather. When do you feel that God is like a mother hen, gathering you up and holding you close? Think about feathers — individually so fragile, they offer shelter and strength to the birds and the chicks, so that when a hen gathers her flock, they share warmth and safety.
- Week 3: A seed or a bulb. Hold it in your hand and notice how it seems lifeless, and yet it brings the possibility of growth and new life. When it is offered to the soil, with the warmth and the water, it can become a thing of beauty or a source of food, or even a mighty tree.
- Week 4: A piece of wood. Think about the uses of wood in building a home, a shelter, a safe place to experience God's grace. Taken from trees, used for fences or flooring, for furniture and fire-building, it is a symbol of home and of the circle of giving and taking in the natural world.
- Week 5: Olive oil or essential oil. Notice the healing, soothing texture of the oil and its beautiful fragrance. It can bind together ingredients when it is used in food, clean and protect skin wounds, sooth sores and promote healing. In this week's gospel lesson, the anointing of Jesus becomes an expression of love and care. How might you pour the "oil of consolation" out for others?
- Week 6: A stone. Hold it, feel its weight and its texture, formed as ancient mineral interacted with the elements. Remember that the stones, too, are telling of God's glory and of God's desire for humans to learn justice and care for each other and the world.

Blessings of the season,  
Pastor Kimberly



### Music Notes

#### In-person Choir Rehearsals

Our choirs have resumed with in-person rehearsals. All participants must be masked and must present their COVID vaccination cards, which will be scanned and kept on file. Newcomers (fully vaccinated and boosted) are welcome as always!

##### **UPC vocal choir, Wednesdays, 6:30–7:30pm in the Library Lounge**

Our vocal choir uses 12-foot spacing between singers during rehearsal, and 6-foot spacing when we sing in worship. KN95 masks are provided if needed.



##### **United Ringers handbell choir, Sundays, 11:30am–12:30pm in the Sanctuary**

Our handbell choir uses 6-foot spacing between ringers. If you're interested in learning how to play handbells, please inquire. If you can count to 4, you can learn to play!



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### Our Church Family

#### Join Us for Worship — in person, online, or over the phone

We have returned to the sanctuary for in-person worship on Sundays at 10:00am. The service is livestreamed on our public YouTube Channel [upcbgm.org/youtube](https://www.upcbgm.org/youtube), our Zoom room [upcbgm.org/zoom](https://www.upcbgm.org/zoom), and our website, and is also accessible on YouTube any time. Those who can't access the worship videos online can call in on the phone to listen live on Sunday mornings, using the Zoom information listed below. So if you are not ready or able to come "in person", you are welcome to participate as you are able.



If you're joining us in person, here's what you need to know:

- We wear masks and keep social distance, and the pews are marked to help us sit safely. We keep the inside doors open throughout worship, and air filtration units are deployed throughout the sanctuary to enhance your safety.
- Pastor Kimberly removes her mask while preaching and leading prayers, to accommodate those who rely on lip-reading to assist their auditory processing.
- Printed worship guides are placed by each door for you to pick up on the way in, and the hymns are printed in the worship guide, so you do not need to use a hymnal to follow along.
- Offering plates are placed by the doors of the sanctuary, but we do not pass them during the offertory. You are still invited and welcome to give online at [upcbgm.org/giving/donate](https://www.upcbgm.org/giving/donate)

Everyone is welcome to join us as we pray, hear God's word read and proclaimed, share our joys and concerns, and experience worshipful music. Our music is presented in person. All of our musicians are masked and fully vaccinated, and the singers at the front of the sanctuary are at least 15 feet away from the first row of pews.

Our worship guide is available for download from our website each week, and it can also be mailed to you if downloading is not an option.

If you have been missing the time of shared prayer, join us at 9:30 before worship — either in the Chapel at church, or on Zoom — for a time of sharing and praying for the needs of our community. After the prayer time, you can stay on Zoom or switch over to the YouTube channel.

- To join the Zoom room online, go to <https://upcbgm.org/zoom>
- To call in: Dial 1-646-558-8656, then enter Meeting ID: 865 274 8433 #, then press # again, and then enter passcode: 42456 #

It would be good to have you with us.

## Holy Week: On the Path to Resurrection

**Palm Sunday is April 10!** At the beginning of Holy Week, Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, setting off the events that led to his crucifixion. Luke's account, however, does not include palms or branches. Instead, people spread their cloaks and garments along the road.

As part of our celebration, we invite you to bring coats and household linens to prepare the way. We will be giving them to those in need after our worship, so they may be gently used, but please make sure that they are clean and ready to share with others. You may put them on the steps at the front of the sanctuary when you arrive, and they will be arranged during the service as part of our preparation.

**Maundy Thursday, April 14, at 7pm:** We will gather in the sanctuary for a service of communion and candles, if COVID numbers allow, and the service will also be streamed on YouTube. We will retell the story of the Passion in simple language and bless each other as we go into the time of waiting for resurrection.

**Easter Sunday, April 17, at 10am:** We will have our regular communion service in the sanctuary, as well as streaming on YouTube.

Following the worship service, the children will gather for the church Easter Egg hunt (weather and COVID allowing). Watch for more information as the season progresses.



*"Prepared" by Hannah Garrity,  
inspired by Luke 24:1-12. Paper lace.  
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### Our YouTube Channel

Did you know that you can “subscribe” to the UPC YouTube channel? Did you know that it won’t cost anything, and that when we have 100 or more subscribers, we get access to some special “perks” as a content creator?

Here’s how it’s done:

- Open YouTube to one of the United Presbyterian Church recordings, by following this link (<https://youtu.be/nn8ZBeTU0kw>) or searching on YouTube.

Scroll down under the video until you see:



United Presbyterian Church of Binghamton

That’s it!

There’s a button over here that says “**SUBSCRIBE**”. Click on the button.

### A beautiful gift!

Artist Linda Cook DeVona, whose parents were a part of First Presbyterian Church many years ago, donated a number of small paintings, with the intention that we will share them with people who are in need of something beautiful to look at.

We have sent one to Rochester with Pastor Becky, and we are looking forward to finding homes for the others with members of our community! Here is what Linda wrote to us:

“My parents (Marion and Lawrence Cook) were longtime members of First Presbyterian Church. I think they joined sometime in the 1940s. I’m donating these paintings in honor of them in your memory. Please distribute the paintings freely with the hopes they will brighten someone’s day — whether it is to welcome a new family to the area, a homebound church member, a nursing home resident, or someone just passing through.”

We are so grateful for this beautiful and unusual gift, and we are looking forward to sharing the paintings!



## Supporting Our Mission and Ministry

**Offering Envelopes:** If you would like to have weekly offering envelopes for 2022 for your cash/check contributions, please contact the church office to request them: [office@upcbgm.org](mailto:office@upcbgm.org) or 607-722-4219.

**Online Giving:** We are able to receive tax-deductible contributions online through our website ([upcbgm.org/giving/donate](http://upcbgm.org/giving/donate)). Contributions can be made by E-check or credit card, and can also be set up as a recurring gift.

We encourage you to lift up in prayer how God will use you to bless UPC in fulfilling our mission to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

## Get Involved!

Our church teams are always welcoming new team members. If you'd like to help with or learn more about the workings of the church, talk to one of the pastors or the elders on Session: **Card Committee:** Suzie Raboy; **Communications,** Sally Hunt; **Deacons,** Allison Nyamuame; **Finance,** Lou McKeage or Andy Chadwick; **Personnel,** Lou McKeage; **Property,** Bill Sands; **Spiritual Formation,** Lou McKeage or Andy Chadwick; **Worship & Music,** Suzie Raboy or Andy Chadwick.

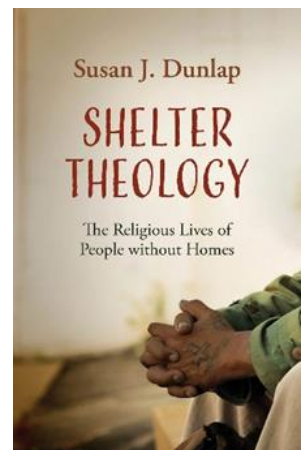
## Programs & Events

### New Book Study: Shelter Theology, by Susan J. Dunlap

Pastor Kimberly read this book in January, and suggested to Session that we should read it together, to add insight into our mission of hospitality. We serve many unhoused people in through our programs, and this book offers an important discussion of the religious lives those who live with housing instability.

We will probably schedule the study for the Easter season, when Pastor Becky will be back from medical leave and spring is close at hand. Let Pastor Kimberly know if you are interested in reading the book, and she will add a copy for you to the order.

Until the spring of 2019, we held book discussions on Monday evenings at 7:00pm. Please also let Pastor Kimberly know if that is still a good time for you, or what your preference would be for a different time.



### Afghan Crisis Project Update

In our last UPC Newsletter, we let you know about the possibility of Sponsor Circles being set up in our Southern Tier area to help re-settle Afghan families. Sponsor Circles are a program set up by the government where groups of volunteers can seek to become mini resettlement groups who work with one of the 9 Resettlement agencies in the United States. They raise money, get background checks, and take some training to get approved to host a family from Afghanistan that had been evacuated to a US military base. The circle helps the new family directly by getting housing, signing children up for school, finding jobs, and settling them into the area. Some of the volunteers in our area from Temple Concord, Temple Israel, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, and UPC have



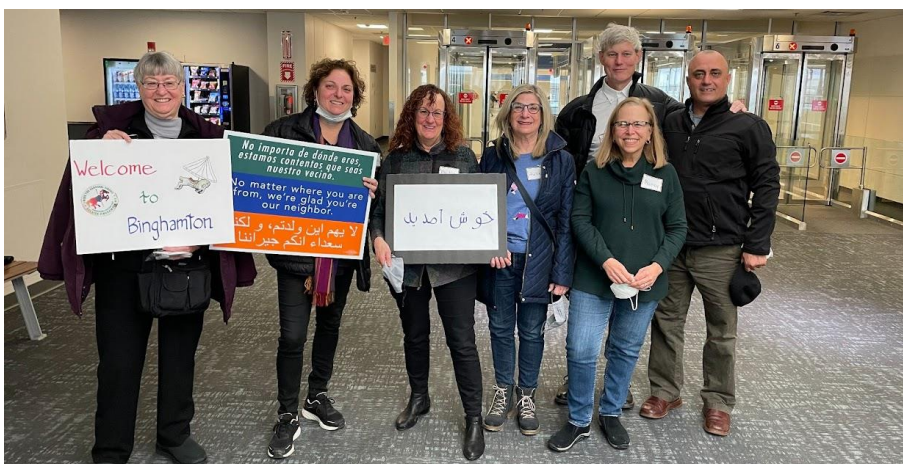
set up a Sponsor Circle, going by the name of “Binghamton Regional Afghan Immigration Network” (BRAIN).

There is hope that once the people already on the bases get moved off and settled, then more applications for Humanitarian Parole can be approved and our original family, whom we had originally been trying to assist, might be able to bring their loved ones here from Afghanistan also. BRAIN has raised the minimum amount of money required to sponsor an Afghan family, completed the other requirements and has sent in the application. Many people from temples, mosques, and churches have committed resources and helped to make this happen.

While we were waiting for our application to be processed, we were busy finding an apartment, and collecting many household items and furniture (via an online “Sign-Up Genius”). After much searching, an appropriate place was found, and we busily started helping the landlord, a friend of someone in our circle, clean and paint the apartment.

While doing this we were informed that we would be receiving a family of five on Thursday, February 10: a dad, a mom, and 3 kids, the youngest of whom is 13. So, members of our Sponsor Circle drove up to Syracuse Airport to greet them and take them back to their new home in Binghamton. They said they never expected such a warm welcome! We arranged for a temporary residence for them at a local church’s rectory, while the apartment was still being readied.

We set up the household for them on the weekend of February 18–21, and they moved in on Tuesday, February 22. We thank Elikem Nyamuame, Felix Rwabukwisi, Nate & Suzie Raboy, and one of Elikem’s students for their help with the move! We have been fortunate enough to have received donations of most of the key items we need. That said, the family could still use gift cards to Weis (which will be their closest market) or Target/Walmart as there are some things the kids will need once they start school. Tax deductible monetary donations may be made payable to Temple Concord with the memo “Afghan Resettlement” on the check, as Temple Concord has set up a dedicated fund for the family. Temple Concord’s address is 9 Riverside Drive, Binghamton, NY 13905.







Lastly, we are seeking a donation of a used car for the family. If you or anyone you know is interested in donating a used car, please let the church or Temple Concord know.

Presently, there are two other Sponsor Circles in the Southern Tier. One is in Binghamton and one is in Owego. And there is the possibility of two more circles in the development stage. Once these other circles get approved, we will also publish their "Sign-Up Genius" as well.

Thank you all so much for your prayers and your support!

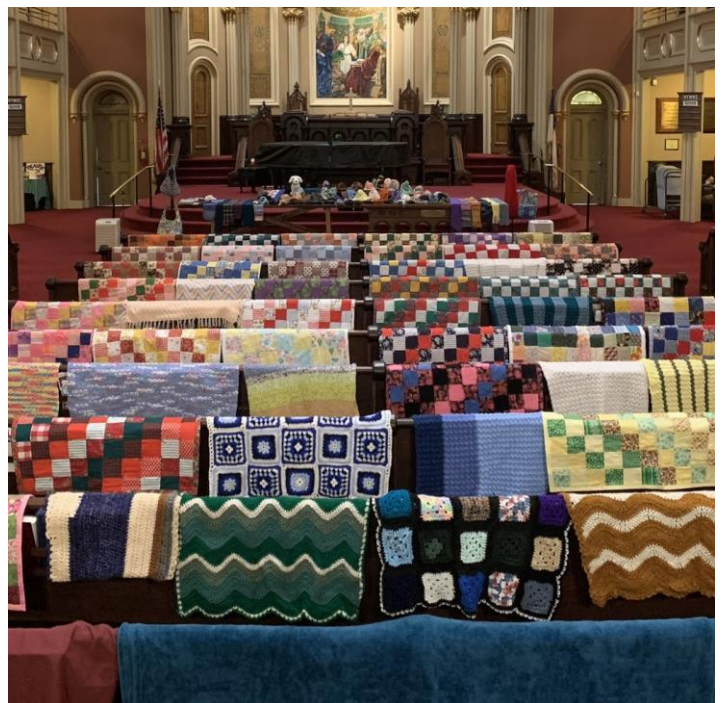
### **Sewing Group: Wednesdays, 10am–1pm (with Zoom lunch hour, 12pm–1pm)**

The Sewing Group meets every week in the Upper Lounge on the 2nd floor, working to create crib-size or lap quilts, decorative pillows, and walker "carry bags," as well as knitted hats, sweaters, mittens, scarves, and baby items. Anyone interested is encouraged to join them on Wednesday mornings starting at 10am. No special sewing skills are needed for cutting squares, design layout, pinning, tying, setting the table for lunch, or heating water for tea. Sewing machine and hand hemming skills are a plus.

Our donations are given to:

**Charities** including

- Mom's House
- the YWCA
- Rescue Mission
- Birthright
- Meals on Wheels
- Camp Sunshine (for children with terminal cancer)



**Care facilities** including

- Willow Point
- Fairview Good Shepherd
- United Methodist Homes (Elizabeth Church & St. Louise Manor)
- Hilltop
- Bridgewater
- Absolute Care

as well as our homebound members, and guests in need who come to our UPC lobby. Any newborns in our congregation receive a quilt gift.

Each Wednesday at noon, those who can't join the Sewing Group in person at the church are invited to "Zoom in" for their lunchtime social hour. Everyone is welcome; bring your lunch and enjoy the company.

### **Our "Zoom room"**

Modern technology is marvelous! Thanks to the Zoom meetings system, we can gather virtually even though we can't be together in person. We've used our "Zoom room" for worship but also for prayer groups, book studies, hymn sings, and social times.

You can join our meetings and worship services online via your computer, tablet, or mobile device by going to [upcbgm.org/zoom](http://upcbgm.org/zoom). If you've never used Zoom before, you'll be prompted to download the Zoom meetings app, which will ask for permission to use your microphone and your camera. We use our "Personal Meeting ID" for worship and most of our programs, so they're always in the same familiar place.

You can also call in over the phone, if you don't have a microphone on your device or you can't join online. To join as a phone call:

- dial **1-646-558-8656**
- then enter our Meeting ID: **865 274 8433 #**
- press # again, then enter the passcode: **42456 #**

If you have questions or need help using Zoom, feel free to call the church office for assistance.

### **Zoom Cocktail hour: Friday evenings, 5–6pm**

Bring your own beverage, "Zoom in", and join the fun as we catch up on the events of the week and share how we're doing. It's a great way to keep in touch while we it remains complicated to see one another in person.



## Joys and Concerns

**Expecting a Baby:** Phil & Eleanor Westcott, boy, June; Ben & Margie Chastain, girl, August

**Travel Mercies:** Bartt

**Health & Wellness:** Dick, Carol, Heidi, John, Pastor Becky (surgery 3/7), Hakan, DeJura, Penny, Vicky, Kathy, Tony, Barbara, everyone affected by Covid

**Living with Cancer:** Romeo, age 5; Molly Y., age 34; April; Ellie

**Grieving:** Laurie; Len; Friends & family of Greg O'Brien, Nicole DoBell, Ed Aswad, Christine Zilnik, Paul Nolton

**Homebound/Managed Care:** Bette A., Gail C., Kristie P., Marian P., Char S., Jim S.



**Ongoing:** Gary A., Grace D., Brian, Harley, Heidi & her children, Dianne H., Bobbie H., Jeffrey J., Becky K., Larry, Audrey M., Penny, Jean R., Fredrick W.

**Other Concerns:** We pray for

- Migrants: new families from Afghanistan in Binghamton, Dave & Greg in Tucson working with Samaritans
- World: Ukraine, western U.S. (drought)

## Recent & Upcoming Birthdays

### February

- 1 Sarah Chadwick
- 3 Bob Walter
- 4 Dave Davis, Elinor Hugenbruch
- 8 Jullian Wanjama
- 14 Pastor Kimberly
- 18 Jenni McKeage
- 19 Cathy Ciganek
- 26 Ron Glowacki, Emily Hugenbruch
- 27 Aaron Whitney

### March

- 4 Ellen Hancock Berti
- 5 Dick Bartholomew
- 7 Suzie Northrop Raboy, Maida Thomas
- 8 Becky Mebert, Bill Sands

12 Chelsie Hill Bennett

13 Scott Kindig

15 Barbara Rocke, Thomas Rossi

17 Marne Ward

22 Khiero-Anthony (Meade) Brunson

25 Ann Cobb

28 Erik Joh

### April

1 Aeden Hickey, Grace Zbrzezny

2 Matthew Livingston

7 Chloe Brauer

8 Kathy Kopp

9 Laurie White, Amanda Licht Jones

12 Tyson-Zadariuss (Meade) Brunson

14 Janet Hoover

20 Angela Garcia-Meade



21 Dominic Ruston-Patinka, James Stehli

22 Maria Kutz, Charlotte Livingston

23 Dick Aswad

24 Pastor Becky

26 Greg Patinka, Zander Rwabukwisi

28 James Menges





*Everyone is welcome here*

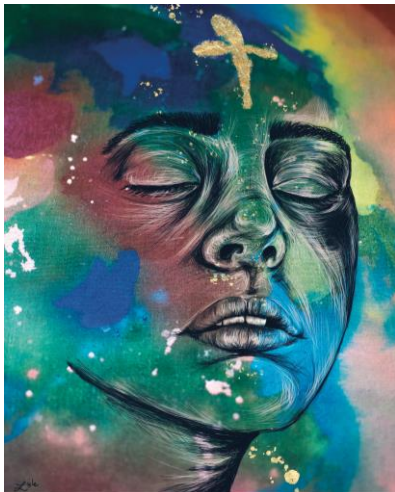
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*"Stardust" by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity (inspired by Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21). Acrylic on raw canvas with digital drawing.  
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## **Ash Wednesday, March 2**

### **Worship service on Zoom at 5:30pm**

All are welcome to join us in the Zoom Room for Ash Wednesday worship at 5:30pm. We will pray, offer a scripture and a short lesson, and lead everyone in the self-imposition of ashes. If you cannot join us at 5:30, you can find the worship guide on our website at [upcbgm.org/ashwednesday](http://upcbgm.org/ashwednesday). Feel free to read the prayers and scripture, pull up the song on YouTube, and mark yourself with a cross with ashes. You can mix the ashes with a few drops of olive or vegetable oil. (Do not mix the ashes with water! It creates an acid that will burn your skin.)

To join online: [upcbgm.org/zoom](http://upcbgm.org/zoom)

To dial as a phone call: **1-646-558-8656**, Meeting ID: 865 274 8433, passcode: 42456

Pastor Kimberly will be offering "Ashes to Go" in the lobby of the education wing from 10am to 12pm on Wednesday, so stop by the church if you want to get ashes in the morning.