

# Worcester Area United Methodists (WAUM)

## Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026 6:45PM-7:45PM



### INFORMAL GATHERING & WELCOME

Pastor Nizzi

### MOMENT OF SILENCE

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor Barry & Leona Morweh

One: Children of God, we gather to prepare for our journey through Lent, a journey of repentance and mercy.

**ALL: We gather to be renewed in God's mercy.**

One: We gather to confess, to tell the truth about sin and our dependence on God's grace.

**ALL: We gather to call upon God's mercy.**

One: We gather to repent, to receive and cooperate with grace as we turn from sin and toward love of God and neighbor.

**ALL: We gather to live in the promise of God's mercy.**

One: People of God, we gather to worship God, whose steadfast mercy and love never fail!

**ALL: We gather to worship, trusting in God's mercy as we follow Jesus on the road to new life. Amen!**

Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,  
 find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:  
 Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see  
 all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,  
 God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,  
 making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,  
 raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,  
 let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:  
 There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,  
 in the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare.

**RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

One: Pastor Steve and Debbie

One: On this first day of Lent we pause, look within, and examine our  
 consciousness.

**ALL: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.**

One: Where we have neglected prayer, been apathetic in worship, found  
 reasons to avoid generosity, or lacked compassion:

**ALL: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.**

One: Where we have colluded in the oppression of those who become  
 invisible in their suffering, and ignored on the streets:

**ALL: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.**

One: Where worry has eroded the gift of Your peace, and where we have  
 cared too much about what others think:

**ALL: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.**

One: As Lent begins, know that God understands how we struggle to stay  
 open and compassionate. The invitation is not to focus on our  
 inadequacies, but on God's gift of grace and love which transforms our  
 hearts and minds. That gift is given to us again, here and now. Be  
 encouraged. May the peace of God be with you

**ALL: And also with you.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON** *God Is Forgiveness*

Debbie O'Driscoll

God is forgiveness. Dare to forgive and God will be with you.  
 God is forgiveness. Love and do not fear.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
**according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.**  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin!

**For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.**

Against you, you only, have I sinned,  
and done that which is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless in your judgment.

**Behold, I was born into iniquity,  
and I have been sinful since my mother conceived me.**

Behold, you desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

**Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

Make me hear with joy and gladness;  
let the bones which you have broken rejoice.

**Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.**

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

**Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your holy Spirit from me.**

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

**Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.**

Deliver me from death, O God,  
God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

**O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth shall show forth your praise.**

For you have no delight in sacrifice;  
were I to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

**The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

*Matthew 6:16-21*

*New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

“And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**BRIEF REFLECTION**      *The Secret Place*

Pastor Nizzi

## **INVITATION TO LENT**

Dear siblings in Christ: the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation. During this season, converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness and restored to participation in the life of the Church. In this way, the whole congregation was reminded of the grace and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ

and the need we all have to renew our faith, to continually receive God's mercies anew.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

**ASH WEDNESDAY LITANY** *We Come*

Pastor Cheryl & Laurene Nichols

One: In the softness of evening, in the solace of silence we come to you, O Lord. We come for acceptance; we come for community; we come for forgiveness and love.

**Sung response: O Lord, Hear Our Prayer 2x. When we call, answer us.  
O Lord, Hear Our Prayer 2x. Come and listen to us.**

**Silence**

One: In the serenity of day's end, in the restfulness of worship, we come to you O Lord. We come to you for respite; we come to you for completion; we come to you for forgiveness and love.

**Sung response: O Lord, Hear Our Prayer 2x. When we call, answer us.  
O Lord, Hear Our Prayer 2x. Come and listen to us.**

**Silence**

One: In the quiet of the night, in the comfort of darkness we come to you, O Lord. We come for peace; we come for comfort; we come for forgiveness and love.

**ALL: We come, O Lord of Light, seeking the illumination of your Word.  
We come for the path we can't find; we come for the life we don't have.  
We come to you, for our lives are death and you alone have breath and being. Amen.**

**THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES**

**ALL: Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.  
Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; only by your mercy are we made new; only by your steadfast love can we live in the joy of your salvation now and forever; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

## IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*In your mercy you call us to the path of repentance.  
You remind us in your Word that we are earth and dust.  
But you promise to lift the poor from dust.  
Come and receive the sign of repentance.*

## HYMN

*Be Thou My Vision*

Pastor Cheryl, Solo

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art.  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be though my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
thou and thou only, first in my heart,  
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Great God of heaven, my victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

## BENEDICTION/BLESSING

Pastor Barry

### Worcester Area United Methodists (WAUM)

Covenant UMC

Pastor Sharon Anderson

Epworth UMC

Pastor Stephen MacLeod

Jesus Life Center

Rev. Thiago Vieira

Oakdale UMC

Rev. Cheryl Meachen

Quinsigamond UMC

Rev Barry Judd

Wesley UMC

Rev. Nizzi Santos Digan

Pastor Joseph Wilson

Commonwealth West District Superintendent: Rev. Megan Stowe

## Looking Ahead

<b>Maundy Thursday Service</b>	<i>Quinsigamond UMC</i>	6:30PM - 7:30PM
<b>Good Friday Service (7 Last Words)</b>	<i>Oakdale UMC</i>	12:00PM - 3:00PM

The cover image is from <https://www.stpeterstettler.ca/ash-wednesday-service-feb-22-2023/>

The Call to Worship is written by *Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, July 2025.*

Responsive Prayer of Confession is written by Ann Siddall and Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2017/02/confession-psalm-51.html>.

Assurance of Pardon is from Taizé Music

Thanksgiving Over the Ashes is from “Invitation to the Observance of the Lenten Discipline,” “Thanksgiving over the Ashes” from The Book of Common Prayer (The Episcopal Church, 1979), 264-269.

Imposition of Ashes is from Ash Wednesday Litany & Imposition of Ashes are Posted on **Lisa’s Liturgies**. <https://sites.google.com/site/lisaliturgies/home>  
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