The United Parish in Brookline

American Baptist • United Church of Christ • United Methodist

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Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

7 pm

Gathering Music — Susan DeSelms, *Minister of Music*

***Call to Worship** *(responsive)*
* means we invite you to rise in spirit or body

One: From wherever we come tonight,
All: God has been expecting us.
One: With whatever strengths and weaknesses we have,
All: God delights in us.
One: When God sets the table,
All: Each one of us is welcome.
One: God sees each of our humanity,
All: That we are each made of stardust and Earth dust.
One: God is always wanting to draw us closer,
All: So that we will taste and see the Goodness of God
One: To know that we are beloved,
All: And to know that we belong.
One: Come, let us worship this invitational God.

***Opening Hymn** — *Come and Find the Quiet Center* — All Sing
Tune: Beach Spring

1. 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.

2. 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.

Welcome — Matisse Peppet, *Seminarian*
Amy Norton-Benfield, *Associate Pastor*
Kent French, *Senior Pastor*

***Prayer** (*unison*)
Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed, A Sanctified Art LLC, sanctifiedart.org

God of hospitality and welcome,
this Lenten season, help us hear your invitation.
Help us rise up out of our day-to-day busy-ness
and see the holiness right in front of us.
Here in this place, settle our hearts,
and open our spirits to hear your Truth anew.
Help us hear your Good News today.
With hope we pray, Amen.

Sung Response *Come and Find a Quiet Center* All Sing

3. 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.

Scripture Genesis 2:4-9

One: For the Word of God in the telling of Creation,
All: Thanks be to God!

Hymn *O God, How We Have Wandered* All Sing
New Century Hymnal #202
Tune: Passion Chorale

Silent Reflection

Scripture Joel 2:12-13; Isaiah 58:3-12

One: For the Word of God in the words of the prophets,
All: Thanks be to God!

Silent Reflection

Sung Response *Return Again* All Sing
by Shlomo Carlebach

Return again, return again,
Return to the land of your soul.
Return again, return again,
Return to the land of your soul.
Return to what you are,
Return to who you are,
Return to where you are born and reborn again.

Prayer of Confession *(responsive)*
from Rev. Sarah A. Speed
and the United Church of Christ Book of Worship

pause

One: Holy and compassionate Creator:
We confess to you and to one another,
and to the whole communion of saints
in heaven and on earth,

continued...

that we have missed the mark by our own fault
in thought, word, and deed;
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

All: We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength.
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.
Show us your compassion, O God.

One: We have ignored your call to serve, as Christ served us.
We have not been true to the mind of Christ.
We have resisted your Holy Spirit.

All: Show us your compassion, O God.

One: We confess to you, O God, our past unfaithfulness:
the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,

All: We confess to you, O God.

One: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways,
and our exploitation of other people,

All: We confess to you, O God.

One: Our anger at our own frustration,
and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

All: We confess to you, O God.

One: Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts,
and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

All: We confess to you, O God.

One: Our negligence in prayer and worship,
and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

All: We confess to you, O God.

One: Accept our repentance, loving God, for the wrongs we have done:
for our failure to notice human need and suffering,
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

All: We confess to you, O God.

One: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors,
and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

All: Accept our repentance, O God.

One: For our waste and pollution of your creation,
and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

All: Accept our repentance, O God.

One: Help us hear your invitation, good Lord,

All: That we will taste and see the Good News around us.

One: Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

All: Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,
That we will show forth your glory in the world.

One: By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

All: Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Silent Reflection

Sung Response *Have Mercy, God, Upon My Life* All Sing
Based on Psalm 51 TUNE: KINGSFOLD

Have mercy, God, upon my life, and make me clean within,
Pour out your everfaithful love and wash away my sin.
Then I will praise you with my heart, my mind, my soul, my voice.
You save the least and seek the lost; let all the world rejoice.

Scripture Matthew 6:1-8, 16-21

One: For the Word of God in the Good News of Jesus Christ,
All: Thanks be to God!

Silent Reflection

Affirmation of Faith *(responsive)*
Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed

One: We believe in a welcoming God,
All: Who leaves on a heavenly porch light on and extends their hands.
One: We believe in an invitational God,
All: Who always has a seat saved for us.
One: We believe in a radically inclusive God,
All: Who eats with the overlooked and the outcast,
the hungry and the downtrodden.
One: We believe in the Good News of Jesus Christ, which reminds us
All: That all of us are welcomed, all are celebrated,
all are loved, and all are claimed.
One: Let us draw near to God's table.
All: That we can taste and see the Good News. Amen.

Imposition of Ashes
All who wish to receive ashes may come forward to the center bringing your order of worship with you.

Anthem *This Bitter Earth* Ruby Abreu
by Clyde Otis, arranged by Max Richter *Soloist*

This bitter earth
Well, what the fruit it bears
This bitter earth
And if my life
Is like the dust
That hides the glow of a rose
What good am I?
Heaven only knows

Lord, this bitter earth
Can be so cold
Today you are young
Too soon, you are old
But while a voice
Within me cries
I'm sure someone
May answer my call
And this bitter earth
May not be so bitter after all

This bitter earth
Lord, this bitter earth
What good is love
That no one shares?
And if my life is like the dust
That hides, the glow of a rose
What good am I?
Heaven only knows

The Lord's Prayer *(unison)*
We invite you to use your chosen words for God: Father, Mother, Allah, or . . .

Our Creator, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name
Thy kin-dom come,
thy will be done,
On Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kin-dom,
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

***Closing Hymn** *Draw the Circle Wide* All Sing
by Mark E. Miller

Draw the circle, draw the circle wide.
Draw the circle, draw the circle wide.
No one stands alone, we'll stand side by side.
Draw the circle, draw the circle wide. *(repeat)*

***Holy Business**

***Benediction**

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Thank you to those serving in worship tonight:
Liturgist: Karina Thompson
Ushers: Karina Thompson, Abi Bonnington, Michael McSherry, Donna Treece

Opportunities in Lent

United Parish Presents: Jazz Sanctuary - Saturday, February 21 at 7pm

Please join us back here in this room on Saturday night, February 21 at 7pm, where we will hear extraordinary jazz saxophonist, composer, and educator Gregory Groover Jr. and pianist Kevin Harris present their own interpretations of Negro spirituals, tunes by the great Thelonious Monk, and original compositions. The Jazz Sanctuary concert series is a ministry of the United Parish that seeks to bring musicians and music lovers together to be inspired, to share ideas, and be transported in this sacred space of timeless beauty. Scan the QR code to buy tickets. Contact Minister of Music Susan DeSelms at susan@upbrookline.org with any questions.

Lenten Prayer Groups - February 18-April 4

With all that is going on in our country and the world, we can all use some spiritual grounding, companionship and solidarity. We are forming Lenten Prayer groups of four or more members to help strengthen our faith, our connection to God and to one another. We encourage each group to meet at least four times during the season of Lent (February 18-April 4). We will offer guidelines to make this fun and helpful. Scan the QR code to sign up. For questions, contact Senior Pastor Kent French at kent@upbrookline.org or Anne Cadigan at atcadigan@gmail.com.

Lenten Dinner Church - Thursdays at 6:00pm

All are welcome to Dinner Church: a contemplative, candlelit service over a shared meal on Thursdays during Lent (February 26, March 5, 12, 19, 26) from 6:00-6:45pm in the Parlor. Doors open at 5:45pm. We'll enjoy soup, salad, bread, music, prayer, and fellowship.

We need your help! We are looking for volunteers to help with setting up, providing soup, salad and bread, sharing a story, reading scripture, and cleaning up. Scan the QR code to sign up. For more information, contact Seminarian Matisse Peppet at seminarian@upbrookline.org.

Lenten Worship - Sundays at 11:00am

"Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in the Good News this Lent"

This Lent, our worship and Church School curriculum follows *A Sanctified Art*'s "Tell Me Something Good." We look to what was central to Jesus' life and ministry: radical welcome, love for neighbor, care for the vulnerable, nourishment for the hungry, nonviolence in the face of injustice. At the heart of Jesus' teachings, we find liberation, love, mercy, and grace—all of which are meant to be very good news for us all. Jesus leads to a richer, more expansive life, but it's not necessarily comfortable. Jesus' ministry can be described as "radical" which comes from the Latin word for "root" or "ground." Therefore, the good news should bring us back to our roots. Embodying Jesus' teachings should ground us in who God created us to be. Can we be "good news" people in a world too often burdened by bad news?

Welcome

We at the United Parish in Brookline believe that all people are made in the image of God and embrace and cherish every person and every kind of family. Jesus Christ welcomed everyone; we seek to follow his example in our own life and worship, by extending God's love and grace abundantly and equally to everyone. We affirm and welcome all people to share in worship, fellowship and leadership with us, to join us in a diversity of race, gender, sexual identity, physical and mental ability, ethnicity and economic means.

We have joined with other Open and Affirming (United Church of Christ) and Welcoming and Affirming American Baptist Churches USA), as well as with the Reconciling Ministries Network (United Methodist Churches) to declare that we are and will remain open to all people.

We invite you to consider becoming a member of the United Parish family. You may become a member by transferring membership or by a statement of faith. If you desire to retain ties with a former church, we invite you to become an associate or affiliate member for the time you are with us.

We ask that you silence all electronic devices.
Please see an usher if you would like a hearing assistive device.

Because our building is open to the public,
an adult should accompany children if/when they leave the worship service.

Ministers	The People of the United Parish
Senior Pastor	Reverend Kent French
Associate Pastor	Reverend Amy Norton-Benfield
Minister of Music	Susan DeSelms
Seminarian	Matisse Peppet
Handbell Choir Director	Tricia Kopko
Choir Section Leader	Ruby Abreu
Choir Section Leader	Emma West
Choir Section Leader	Joey Timmons
Choir Section Leader	Valentine Umeh
Multimedia Producer	Jordan Wuth
Parish Administrator	Sarah Fitzpatrick
Accounting Administrator	Jim Smith
Building Manager	Rebekah Shore
Head Custodian	Violet Nowlan
Custodian	Emery Bibbins
Custodian	Joy Hanlon
Nursery Supervisor	Katy Lum
Nursery Staff	Adrianna Dionisio
Nursery Staff	Anne Florient
Nursery Staff	Ione Madsen Hardy
Nursery Staff	Ashlyn O'Dowd
Pastor Emerita	Patricia Coughlin

UNITED PARISH IN BROOKLINE

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