



## *Ash Wednesday February 14*

Lent begins on Valentine's Day this year.

We will mark the day with a combined worship service at St. John's at 6 PM. Pastors Karen Kelley of Westminster Presbyterian Church and Kerry Taylor-Snyder of First Congregational UCC will join Pastor Judy as officiants.

We will have a combined choir for this service, so if you would like to sing, please contact Michele Wilson at [micheleowilson@gmail.com](mailto:micheleowilson@gmail.com). Our first practice will be February 4 following worship.



## February Calendar

FEB 4 - WPC JOINS US FOR WORSHIP

FEB 6 - ENNEAGRAM DISCUSSION 4 PM;  
CENTERING PRAYER 5 PM

FEB 11,18,25 - WORSHIP 10:30 AM; BOOK STUDY BEGINS FEB. 18

FEB 7,14,21,28 - OH, FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC! 2 PM

FEB 14 - VISION 2025 1:30 PM  
COUNCIL MEETING 3 PM  
COMBINED ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP 6 PM @ SJUCC

FEB 16 - FOOD PANTRY/BABY SPRINKLES/KIDS CLOSET 10AM-12 PM

FEB 20- COMMUNITY DINNER 6 PM

FEB 24 - COMMUNITY SPECIAL NEEDS WINTER DANCE 7-9 PM

FEB 27 - ELECTION DAY

MAR 3 - SJUCC WORSHIPS AT WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN 10 AM

## February 2024



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## *From the Pastor's Screen*

Last week when Darryl Hackworth asked me to explain Ash Wednesday, I realized I knew very little about the day and how it began. Why is the day important to Christians?

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and it is always 46 days before Easter. Lent is traditionally a season of penance which prepares us for the new life offered by the Risen Christ. Our Ash Wednesday tradition originated in the 11th century as a symbol of repentance. The Imposition of Ashes comes from the Old Testament description of deep grief and sorrow, where penitents sat in "sackcloth and ashes."

Ash Wednesday is also a day of fasting. Christians may abstain from eating meat, and for many Christians a form of fasting continues throughout the season of Lent.

According to journalist Ashley Ross, the Imposition of Ashes in the sign of a cross was not practiced by all forms of Christianity and only became popular in the United States around 1970. It is a multi-sensory, organic way to embody faith in our everyday lives, as well as providing an outward sign of faith.

The ashes come from the palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday. I save unused palms and burn them in a metal bowl in my backyard to create the ashes. When a few drops of oil are added, the ashes become spreadable and will remain on a person's forehead in the visible sign of the cross.

I can recall riding home on the school bus one Ash Wednesday afternoon with my cross-shaped ashes visible on my forehead. I explained to the public-school kids that yes, I knew my forehead had dirt on it. "But it's not dirt," I said. "Today is Ash Wednesday, and these are ashes." That was all I could say, because I really did not understand the connection of ashes to penance and mortality.

The meaning of the ashes comes from Genesis 3:19, in which God said, "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Those words, spoken over us, are powerful: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Yes, we will all die. Yes, we all feel some regret. We feel these emotions when the ashes are placed upon our skin. Then, the overwhelming hope we find in Christ beckons us as we turn and look toward Easter.

- Pastor Judy

All go to one place.  
All are from the dust,  
and to dust all return.

Ecclesiastes 3:20



Be the Blessing

**SOMETHING FOR  
EVERYONE!**

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO  
TO BE A BLESSING:

INVITE FRIENDS TO CHURCH  
BRING WARM HATS, SCARVES,  
GLOVES

SING EACH WEDNESDAY  
ATTEND THE COMMUNITY  
DINNER - OR BRING DESSERT  
HELP WITH THE NHL LIBRARY  
PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH

BRING DONATIONS FOR BABY  
SPRINKLES AND KIDS' CLOSET  
VOLUNTEER TO BE AN USHER  
SIGN UP FOR COFFEE HOUR  
OFFER YOUR MUSICAL GIFTS  
NOTICE WHO'S MISSING

FROM WORSHIP  
... AND REACH OUT WITH  
LOVE!

# Lenten Study

Our Lenten book study will be Adam Hamilton's **24 Hours That Changed the World**. "No single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. In this book, Hamilton will help you experience and understand the significance of Jesus' suffering and death like never before. He retraces the day that changed human history in his usual straightforward yet easy, conversational style that speaks to both long-time Christians and those who are simply curious about the story of Christ's crucifixion." Hamilton is the senior pastor of the United Methodist Church of Leawood, Kansas.

Books will be available soon. Each Sunday beginning on February 18 we will have a discussion following worship for all who would like to participate. If there is interest for a Zoom book study group during the week, we will offer that as well. We were surprised to find that our Westminster Presbyterian friends are also studying this same book -- which may offer more opportunities for discussion!

Contributed by Jan Janke and Judy Goodrow



In January, nine individuals received emergency food and 15 people took showers. The Samaritan Fund provided assistance for one eviction and one utility payment.

Contributed by Michele Wilson

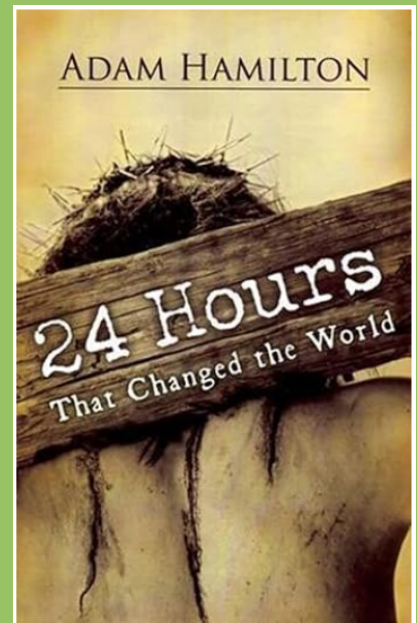
Our January Baby Sprinkle and Kids' Closet was held on January 19 and served 24 families, representing 48 children.

Contributed by Donna Benedict

Our January food pantry served 110 persons. 3500 pounds of food was distributed. Fifty persons were served at our Community Dinner on January 23.

We are grateful for the Meijer Simply Give Program. Our food pantry will receive \$6,090 in food items! Thank you to all who purchased Simply Give cards.

Contributed by Carl Robinson



**SIMPLY give**

**together,  
we can help end  
hunger in our  
community.**

Rev. Judy Goodrow

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