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*The beginning of the Lenten Season*  
*Wednesday*  
*March 5, 2025*  
*7:00 PM*  
*First Congregational Church of Paxton*

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We're doing something special this year and we hope you will join us. The ***First Congregational Church of Paxton*** has invited us to join them for their ***Ash Wednesday service***. The day before is Shrove Tuesday and some refer that day as Mardi Gras. It is the feasting before the fasting. Ash Wednesday officially marks the beginning of Lent.

Lent is a somber period of self-reflection and seeking repentance. It would be great if we joined the ***First Congregational Church of Paxton*** in our Lenten Journey as churches, congregations, and church families. I believe it is important to share a meaningful Lenten journey to truly appreciate the Glory of Easter.

Our faith journey began a long, long time ago. Isaiah is one of my favorite prophets. He was reluctant to be a prophet, but God convinced him. Do you remember his words? "There shall a star from Jacob come forth and a scepter from Israel rise up", these words encourage the belief that the Messiah would come, but that wait was so long. They believed so strongly and for so long until ***That Night***. You remember that night with the angels, the star, the shepherds, the Wise Men, and of course the birth of Jesus.

Some say love was born at Christmas, and that is true. I also believe that HOPE was born out of the strong beliefs of the Israelites. The world now had the Christ Child and we could only hope that Isaiah was correct. The first thirty years of his life could be considered unremarkable compared to the last three years.

The New Testament Church was born from the teachings of Jesus. As he spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven and of salvation, people's hope got stronger and stronger. Hope also grew as Jesus turned water into wine, gave sight to the blind, helped the immobile walk, expel the demons from the bodies of his future followers, and raising Lazarus from the dead.

As we enter Lent with the same Hope, we, like Jesus, must make our journeys. Jesus must walk this journey alone, but we can share our journey as a church. We are heading to the same place; we are heading to the cross. Jesus knows where he is heading...he knows what lies ahead, but he continues to travel; not for himself, but for us. We are heading to the cross, but beyond that to the empty tomb and to salvation. God sacrificed his son for us because he loves us. As I look at

the empty tomb, I see a new birth. Out of the hope and out of the resurrection, I believe true faith was born. Isaiah was right, hope was strong and from this we can securely place our faith in God the Father, Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Please plan on joining the ***First Congregational Church of Paxton*** on ***Ash Wednesday and also on Maundy Thursday***. The Paxton congregation has been invited to join us here, at the ***First Congregational Church in Worcester*** for a very special ***Good Friday*** service. Each day is yet another step in our journey. Before we get to the empty tomb, we must enter the upper room, pray in the garden, witness a trial and a brutal death, let's travel together. Our faith is strong and it will bring us to the empty tomb.

**Their Address is  
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*Church office hours ~ Monday, Thursday & Friday 10am - 2pm*