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Press Release

Churches collaborate to take Ash Wednesday to the Streets

Pittsfield, MA, February 24, 2022: On Ash Wednesday, March 1, four city churches are teaming up to offer Ashes to Go. The Rev. Dr. Nina Pooley, Rector at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and Pastor Joel Bergeland from Zion Lutheran Church will be offering ashes to those who walk or drive up to the Allen Street entrance of St. Stephen's from Noon to 1:00 PM. (Please remember that Allen Street is one-way, running north to south.)

The Rev. Jenny Gregg from Cathedral of the Beloved and the Rev. Cara Davis, pastor at First Congregational Church, will be making ashes available on North Street near the Intermodal Transportation Center from 11:00 AM to Noon.

In the Christian tradition, Ash Wednesday marks the start of the holy season of Lent, a time for reflection and repentance in preparation for the celebration of Easter. For centuries, Christians have received a cross of ashes on the face at the beginning of that season as a reminder of our human imperfections and an invitation to receive God's forgiveness. These four congregations are part of a collaborative effort among downtown churches to make this tradition more accessible to the larger community.

"Ashes to Go is about bringing the important traditions of our faith out from behind church walls and into the places we need them every day," says the Rev. Pooley. "As people get busier and busier, we need the church in new and non-traditional ways. We especially need reminders of forgiveness in the tough places of our everyday lives. The people who accept ashes on the street are often people longing to make a connection between their faith and the forces of daily life, and Ashes to Go helps them feel that connection."

[St. Stephen's Episcopal Church](#) holds services at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays at 67 East Street, Pittsfield.

[Zion Lutheran Church](#) worships at 10:00 AM Sundays at 74 First Street, Pittsfield.

[Cathedral of the Beloved](#), an outdoor community founded in the radical tradition of Jesus, gathers on the lawn of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, 414 North Street, Pittsfield at 1:00 PM on Sundays.

[First Church of Christ](#) holds Sunday worship at 10:00 AM at 27 East Street, Pittsfield.