

ASH WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 22, 2023

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent - a period of 40 days of prayer for God to help us move to acts of prayer, fasting, and charity, and restore in us a clean heart. It is a time for the church, and all the world, to remember that we belong to one another and to God. Tonight, we embody this through the ritual of receiving ash on our foreheads. The ash reminds us of our sin and mortality, that we are dust and to dust we shall return. The form of the cross proclaims to us that Christ is the source of forgiveness and new life.

In the weeks ahead, our Wednesday evening worship will include opportunities to reflect on this. We will learn and practice the "body prayer" where we focus on parts of our body as we pray that God would open our eyes, hands, ears, heart, and life. We will also sing together the liturgy of Holden Evening Prayer and learn a different Taizé prayer song each week. On Sunday mornings, we will hear a number of difficult parables of Jesus. While often unsettling, each one has a lesson learned as we learn about God and ourselves.

Prelude: "Canon in D/All in All," arr. Marilyn Dichsen
Marilyn Dichsen, pianist

JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17

Reader: Sharon Woodworth

¹Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
 for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—
²a day of darkness and gloom,
 a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread upon the mountains
 a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
 nor will be again after them
 in ages to come.

¹² Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.
¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain-offering and a drink-offering
for the LORD, your God?
¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶ gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.
¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
Let them say, ‘Spare your people, O LORD,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples,
“Where is their God?”’

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing that you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon

and forgiveness, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

PSALM 51:1-3

All: ¹ **Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.**
² **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.**
³ **For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.**

MATTHEW 18:1-9

¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ ²He called a child, whom he put among them, ³and said, ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

⁵Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

⁶If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of stumbling-blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling-block comes!

⁸If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell of fire.

MEDITATION

(Silence for reflection)

INVITATION TO LENT

P: Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

A LITANY OF CONFESSION

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination)

P: Most holy and merciful heavenly Father,

C: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed. We have sinned both by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

P: 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.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: We confess our envy of those who have things we do not, and our excessive love of material goods and earthly comforts.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: We confess our lapses into blindness to human need and suffering, and into indifference to injustice and cruelty.

C: **Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: We confess our wastefulness and pollution of your creation.

C: **Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

C: **Have mercy on us, O God.**

LITANY AND PRAYERS

(piano)

A *Repeat continuously*

(Hmmm)

B

God — of mer - cy, hold us in love.

Leader: A B

1. In peace, in peace, we pray to you:

Leader: A B

2. For peace and sal-va-tion, we pray to you:

Leader: A B

3. For peace be-tween na - tions, for peace be-tween peo-ples:
4. For us who are gath-ered to wor-ship and praise you:
5. For all of your ser-vants who live out your gos-pel:
6. For all those who gov - ern, that jus-tice might guide them:
7. For all those who la - bor in ser-vice to oth - ers:
8. Grant weath-er that nour - ish - es all of cre - a - tion:
9. Keep watch on our loved ones and keep us from dan-ger:
10. For all the be - lov - ed who rest in your mer - cy:

Leader:

Help us, com - fort us, all of our days:

All:

Keep— us, hold— us, gra - cious God.

Text and Music: Marty Haugen, b. 1950; © 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

P: Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life. We pray this through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

As we sing, “Sign Us with Ashes,” you are invited forward to receive ashes on your forehead. Ash is a symbol of repentance and our mortality. It traces a cross on our foreheads just as a cross of oil was placed there at our Baptism.

This cross of ash proclaims that, by our repentance, new life is granted through Christ’s saving death on the cross. All who desire to receive ashes may come forward down the center aisle and return by way of the side aisles.

SONG: “Sign Us with Ashes”

(piano)

Verses will be sung by a soloist; congregation joins on Refrain

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major and 4/4 time. The first staff is marked 'All' and contains the lyrics: 'Sign us with ash-es, mer-ci-ful God, chil-dren of dust, as to dust we re-turn.' The second staff is marked '5' at the beginning and 'To Verses' at the end, containing the lyrics: 'Sign us with ash-es, mer-ci-ful God; mark us and make us your own.' The music consists of a simple melody with a steady rhythm.

Verse 1: Surely, you alone can save us. You pay our price with precious blood. Reaching through your great compassion you lift up your people with love. **Refrain**

Verse 2: Surely, you alone uphold us. You give us strength for all our needs. Shielding with a father’s favor, you bless us with pardon and peace. **Refrain**

Verse 3: Surely, you alone can heal us. Yours is the will to make us whole. Soothing with a mother’s kindness, the contrite of heart, you console. **Refrain**

Verse 4: Surely, you alone can free us. You break the bonds of guilt and sin. Bracing, till we walk uprightly, you bolster our hope once again. **Refrain**

Verse 5: Surely, you alone refine us. You give us grace for lives made new, forging, through your fire and radiance, a sacrifice worthy for you. **Refrain**

Verse 6: Surely, you alone redeem us. You fill our dust with holy breath. Bursting from the grave in glory, you rise from the ashes of death. **Refrain**

P: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation

C: that we may show forth your glory in the world.

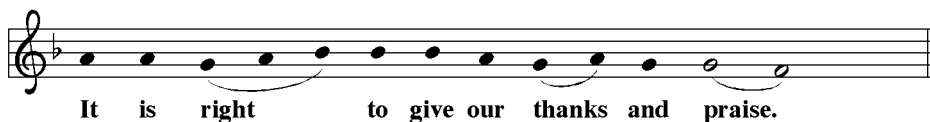
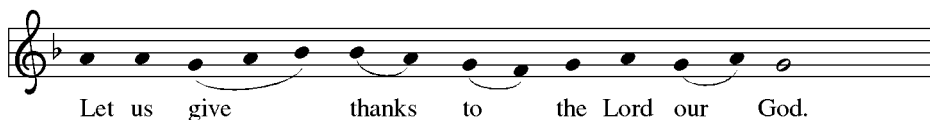
P: By the cross and passion of your Son,

C: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

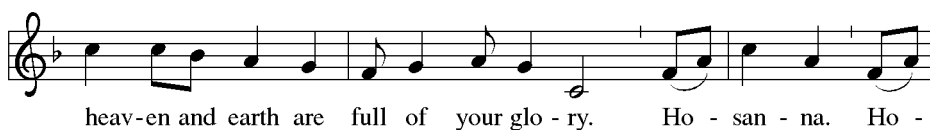
P: Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

C: Amen.

THE LORD'S SUPPER



Ⓟ It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, ... and join their unending hymn:



san - na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom 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 kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

DURING DISTRIBUTION:

“Just as I Am, without One Plea” ELW 592 (*organ*)

- 1 **Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**
- 2 **Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt, fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**
- 3 **Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come,**
- 4 **Just as I am; thy love unknown has broken ev'ry barrier down; now to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

1. **Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.**
2. **Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me.**
3. **I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me.**
4. **I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me!**
5. **Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.**

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude



Adam Dichsen, Pastor
Sharon Zuiderveld, Musician

Hallie Mayner, Communion Assistant
Sharon Woodworth, Reader
Patty Nelson, Usher
Marilyn Dichsen & Pat Kiihne, Soloists
Liam Waggener, Acolyte
Kris Roth, Chancel Committee
Judy Dillard & Vicki Robson, Greeters

Ash
Wednesday 

Please join us for the remaining Wednesdays in Lent as we gather for Worship. We will begin with soup suppers at 6:00 p.m. If you are able, bring a dish to share, but if not, come and share in the food and fellowship with us. At 6:45, we will gather in the sanctuary for worship.

Please join us for Sunday morning worship at 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School for all ages begins at 10:45 a.m.

Song Credits

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