



Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

All requested to enter the worship space with silence

***Those who are able may stand**

PRELUDE

SONG OF CONTEMPLATION #701....."Lord, Prepare Me"

Sing 2 times

***CALL TO WORSHIP Fast From/Feast On**

-By William Arthur Ward

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Fast from judging others; | Feast on the Christ dwelling in them. |
| Fast from emphasis on differences; | Feast on the unity of life. |
| Fast from apparent darkness; | Feast on the reality of light. |
| Fast from thoughts of illness; | Feast on the healing power of God. |
| Fast from words that pollute; | Feast on phrases that purify. |
| Fast from discontent; | Feast on gratitude. |
| Fast from anger; | Feast on patience. |
| Fast from pessimism; | Feast on optimism. |
| Fast from worry; | Feast on divine order. |
| Fast from complaining; | Feast on appreciation. |
| Fast from negatives; | Feast on affirmatives. |
| Fast from unrelenting pressures; | Feast on unceasing prayer. |
| Fast from hostility; | Feast on non-resistance. |
| Fast from bitterness; | Feast on forgiveness. |
| Fast from self-concern; | Feast on compassion for others. |
| Fast from personal anxiety; | Feast on eternal truth. |
| Fast from discouragements; | Feast on hope. |
| Fast from facts that depress; | Feast on verities that uplift. |
| Fast from lethargy; | Feast on enthusiasm. |
| Fast from thoughts that weaken; | Feast on promises that inspire. |

Fast from shadows of sorrow;

Feast on the sunlight of serenity.

Fast from idle gossip;

Feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm;

Feast on prayer that [strengthens].

*CONFESSION OF NEED (Responsive)

God, you are life, You are the giver of life's beauty, and You are light that lets us see it. So, tonight we gather to remember this.

That while our bodies come from ashes and our lives are filled with weakness You breath beauty into both and shame into none.

Come close us to now, oh God.

Show us the beauty in our Ashes so we might finally claim and hand them over to you.

Humble Us

Hold Us

Heal Us

As we name all ways, we need you now.

(Silence for Confession)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

HYMN #466....."Come and Fill Our Hearts" Taze
Sing 2 times

SCRIPTURE

FIRST READING.....Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 (Pg. 942)

GOSPEL READING.....2 Corinthians 5:20 – 6:10 (Pg. 191)

Leader: The Word of the Lord People: Thanks be to God!

MEDITATION

Taste and See

HYMN #213....."In the Cross of Christ I Glory"
vs. 1 & 2

LITANY OF ASHES (Responsive)

We confess that, like Abraham and Sarah, we are but dust and ashes. (Genesis 18:27)

And yet we are grateful to be dust that breathes, ashes that live, even though our days are numbered.

As we enter Lent, we hear the trumpet sounding its alarm, announcing the day of the Lord and calling us to rend our hearts. (Joel 2:1,13)

In this season of lengthening days, let us return at length to the One who waits for us, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Joel 2:13)

In the prophet Isaiah we hear the God who is still speaking ask, Is not this the fast I choose? To undo injustice, to break oppression, and to recognize all who are in need as your own kin. (Isaiah 58:6-7)

And we acknowledge that we are entangled, both by personal impulses and by societal forces that invite us to disregard the needs of the world today.

We hear the cries of the poor and the migrant, of family farmers and communities of color, even as the rhetoric around us seeks to pit one child of God against another.

But now, O Loving Creator of all that is, remind us that it is through deeds of compassion and in communities of love that light breaks forth like the dawn. (Isaiah 58:8)

We hear—in the voices of scientists, in the screams of wildfires and extreme weather, and in the quieter anguish of dying animals and ecosystems—the pleading cry of a planet whose peril is more real today than at any moment since humans have walked the Earth.

And we, who are but dust and ashes—we are *also* ones made in your image. And perhaps we were born for just such a time as this. (Esther 4:14)

O Liberating God, break the spell that tells us we are separate from the Earth. Teach us the truth that *by grace* you created us out of dust and ashes. And anoint us in this *kairos* moment to be your church.

Let us be marked by ash—made one, like Jesus, with all the precarious Earth. And anointed by oil—to act, alongside Jesus, with urgency and compassion for our human siblings and the whole of creation.

During this Season of Ash and Oil, may we make humility, solidarity, and action for justice the treasure we store up. For where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also. (Mt. 6:21)

AMEN.

INTRODUCTION TO ASHES

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

The Imposition of Ashes is available to those who wish to receive this sign of frailty, repentance, and renewal. Those who desire to receive ashes should exit the pew by the side aisle, receive the ashes, and return by the center aisle. As the ashes are being imposed, we will sing the following Chorus. There will be short instrumental interludes which will lead back to the Chorus. Keep repeating the Chorus until everyone has returned to their seat.

SONG DURING ASHES

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

People are invited to come forward to receive the ashes. When you come forward and ashes are placed on your forehead you will hear: “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.”

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S TABLE

PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

HYMN #301 *"Let Us Build a House"*

vs. 1 & 2

*BENEDICTION

I have always found it interesting,
this practice we have of spreading someone's ashes
in all the varied places that they loved
and claimed as a part of them, as home.

Across the wide sea,
or on the old family farm,
or snuck onto the 50-yard line against the rules,
or so many grand and simple any where's in between.

What if Ash Wednesday is like that?
What if, year after year, we're just gathering like family
to scatter God's ashes.
Marking all the places God so loves, and claims as home?
Like you,
like me,
like them,
like all.