



ASH

WEDNESDAY

Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.

Let today be the day you give up who you've been for who you can become.

OPENING

Pastor Joyce: Welcome to a service for Ash Wednesday. In this time we will prepare ourselves for the season of Lent. Then Lent will lead us to gratitude for all Jesus' Easter gifts and promises. To prepare we will follow Jesus' teachings. We will confess everything that separates us from God and receive God's wonderful forgiveness. Then our slates will be wiped clean and we will take our places as people adopted into God's family.

Many symbolize the need to confess by having ashes imposed on our foreheads or wrists. Then forgiveness is symbolized by having the ashes washed away leaving us clean in God's eyes.

If you wish to participate this way when we are virtual, three methods may be followed.

1. In a few minutes, if you have picked up items from the church, you may impose the ashes on yourself or on one another. Then, later in the service, you may wipe them clean with the wet-wipe.

or

2. You may use items from your home, such as coffee grounds for ash and later a dish cloth for cleansing, for example.

or

3. You may not use physical items but go through the motions of imposition and cleansing.

If you don't wish to follow the symbolism, please pray during these parts of the service. Let us begin.

GREETING

Pastor Doug: Let us look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was waiting, endured the cross. Jesus came to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of God's favor.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Unison: Knowing that we are imperfect beings, we symbolize our guilt, our omissions and commissions, and our laxness in enthusiasm by imposing these ashes on our skin.

Pastors impose ashes on one another.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor Joyce: We have left many important pursuits to gather here. In these moments, worship is of first importance.

Pastor Doug: Together, we begin a season of self-examination. We begin a humble walk with God through Lent.

Pastor Joyce: This is a time for building spiritual disciplines. Those disciplined by Christ became disciples.

Pastor Doug: We seek to follow in the steps of Jesus. We want to walk in the paths where Christ leads.

Pastor Joyce: May God empower us here with genuine righteousness. Let patience, kindness, and truthful speech prevail.

Pastor Doug: We seek knowledge and the will to live by it. We seek community and the capacity to share it.

PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

Pastor Jon: We come from home and school and work. We have quieted our souls in worship. Now begins the season for inward searching. Close your eyes. Be still. Listen. We are entering a holy time, the time of Lent, for we are journeying into the sacred center of our faith. We are entering the depths of our own hearts. Jesus is waiting for us, reaching out to us, inviting us to leave ordinary time and to follow him along the journey that brought him to the cross. Listen in silence, for Jesus is calling you.

INVOCATION

Pastor Jon: Loving Lord of life, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, we ask You to give us the grace and strength to make the changes that are needed in our lives; and, in so doing, may we be open to Your leading. Please keep us mindful that You are with us in every moment, offering us the strength and creativity to choose what is right. Amen.

SCRIPTURE FOR CONFESSION

Psalm 51:1-17

Pastor Doug: ¹ Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. ² Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. ³ For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. ⁴ Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. ⁵ For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. ⁶ But you desire honesty from the womb, teaching me wisdom even there. ⁷ Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than

snow. ⁸ Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. ⁹ Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. ¹³ Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you. ¹⁴ Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. ¹⁵ Unseal my lips, O Lord, that my mouth may praise you. ¹⁶ You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.”

HYMN

"Just As I Am"

CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT, 1836

L. M.

WILLIAM B. BRADBURY, 1849

In moderate time

1. Just as I am, with - out one plea But
 2. Just as I am, and wait - ing not To
 3. Just as I am, though tossed a - bout With
 4. Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind, Sight,
 5. Just as I am, Thou wilt re - ceive, Wilt
 6. Just as I am, Thy love un - known Has

that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidd'st me
 rid my soul of one dark blot, To Thee, whose blood can
 many a con - flict, many a doubt, Fight - ings and fears with -
 rich - es, heal - ing of the mind, Yea, all I need in
 wel - come, par - don, cleanse, re - lieve; Be - cause Thy prom - ise
 bro - ken ev - ery bar - rier down; Now to be Thine, yea,

come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
 cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
 in, with - out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
 Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
 I be - lieve, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
 Thine a - lone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come! A-MEN.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Pastor Doug: Welcome to a season of self examination. Let us ponder the depth of God's love. Let us ponder what God wills for us and the world; which the Bible names as justice and Jesus called "life abundant." Finally let us ponder what God asks us to do. How are we to treat the earth, ourselves, and one another?

Let us open ourselves to God's presence, knowing that God is here and everywhere, and that God speaks to us in our inmost being. Let us open ourselves to God's wisdom and guidance, trusting that God will lead us in the way of truth. Through hardship, pandemic, and conflict, we trust in the transformative love of God."

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Pastor Joyce: Holy God, this is a hard time. The focus of Lent is on the pain and suffering of Jesus and our own need for penitence. It is a time of gathering darkness. But we would rather skip this part and go straight to Easter. We would rather ignore the suffering – in You and in the world – and avoid the hard work of true self examination. Forgive us for wanting this to be bright and painless and easy, when we know that Jesus did not take the easy way but chose instead the path of the Cross. Teach us the true meaning of penitence, so that we use this Lenten season to humbly seek a clean heart and a renewed spirit.

Pastor Joyce: We have not loved You with all our heart, mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

Unison: Have mercy on us, O God.

Pastor Joyce: We have been deaf to Your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved Your Holy Spirit.”

Unison: Have mercy on us, O God.

Pastor Joyce: We confess to You, O God, all our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

Unison: We confess to You, O God.

Pastor Joyce: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways and our exploitation of other people,

Unison: We confess to You, O God.

Pastor Joyce: Our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

Unison: We confess to You, O God.

Pastor Joyce: Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts and our dishonesty in our daily life and work,

Unison: We confess to You, O God.

Pastor Joyce: Our negligence in prayer and worship and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

Unison: We confess to You, O God.

Pastor Joyce: Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrongs we have done. For the neglect of human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

Unison: Accept our repentance, O God.

Pastor Joyce: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

Unison: Accept our repentance, O God.

Pastor Joyce: For our waste and pollution of Your creation and our lack of concern for those who come after us.

Unison: Accept our repentance, O God.

Pastor Joyce: Restore us, O God, and let Your anger depart from us.

Unison: Favorably hear us, O God, for Your mercy is great. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor Joyce: The truth is this: God's love and mercy are never-ending. God knows us in our inmost being; God cleanses us from our sins and shortcomings and restores to us the joy of salvation.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Genesis 3:8-13, 15-17

Pastor Doug: ⁸ When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So, they hid from the Lord God among the trees. ⁹ Then the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked." ¹¹ "Who told you that you were naked?" the Lord God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it." ¹³ Then the Lord God asked the woman, "What have you done?" "The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it." ¹⁶ Then he said to the woman, "I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you." ¹⁷ And to the man he said, "Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it."

Pastor Doug: Here ends the first reading.

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Pastor Jon: ²⁰ So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" ²¹ For God made Christ,

who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. 6 ¹As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it. ² For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation. ³ We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry. ⁴ In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. ⁵ We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food. ⁶ We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love. ⁷ We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense. ⁸ We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors. ⁹ We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. ¹⁰ Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

Pastor Jon: The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION

Rev. Joyce M. Donigian

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Beautiful Things”

Performed by Pastor Jon Bauman

For lyrics, see last page

INVITATION FOR CLEANSING OF ASHES

Pastor Doug: The imposition of ashes is an outward sign of our repentance. Our confessions have been heard by God. We are forgiven. As an outward sign of our changed hearts, we will now wash away the ashes of our sin and present ourselves as clean in God’s eyes. This act is a sign of our salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus.

Pastors wash off the imposed ashes.

BLESSING

Pastor Jon: Our loving Father does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they may turn from their distorted lives and live. Therefore, we implore God to grant us true repentance that those things which we do this day may be pleasing to God, that the rest of our lives may be lived faithfully, and that at the last we may come to God’s eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Unison: Thanks be to God! Go in peace. Amen.

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Beautiful Things by Gungor

All this pain
I wonder if I'll ever find my way
I wonder if my life could really change,
at all
All this earth
Could all that is lost ever be found?
Could a garden come out from this
ground, at all?
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the
dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us
All around,
Hope is springing up from this old
ground
Out of chaos life is being found, in you
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the
dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us
Oh, you make beautiful things

You make beautiful things out of the
dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us
You make me new,
You are making me new
You make me new,
You are making me new
(Making me new)
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the
dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us
Oh, you make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the
dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us
You make me new,
You are making me new
You make me new,
You are making me new



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