

# Ash Wednesday Evening Service

February 26, 2020

## Gather

Prelude

*Just As I Am*  
Bradbury arr. Alexander

### Invitation to the Lenten Discipline

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season in the church year known as Lent. Lent is a time to prepare for the celebration of Easter and to renew our life in the mystery of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes, a biblical symbol of mourning and penitence. This ancient sign speaks of the fragility of human life, and marks the penitence of the community of faith. I invite you, therefore, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of love, and by reading and meditating on the Word of God,<sup>1</sup> beginning with this service today.

Call to Worship

Joel 2: 1-2, 12-14

Blow 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—

a 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.

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?

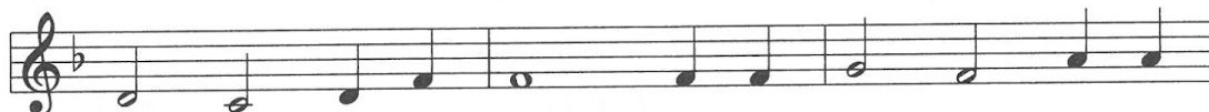
+Hymn (insert)  
*Ashes*

*Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's*

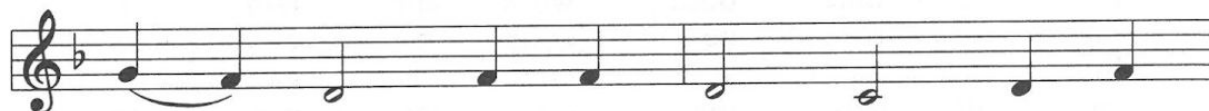
# 2138 Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes



1. \*Sun-day's palms are Wednes-day's ash - es as an -
2. We have failed to love our neigh - bors, their of -
3. We are hast - y to judge oth - ers, blind to



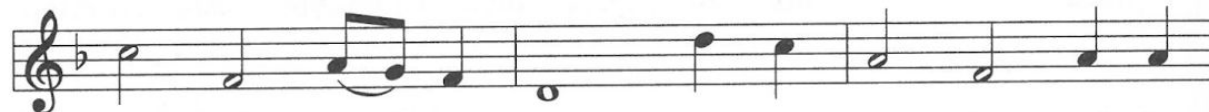
oth - er Lent be - gins; thus we kneel be - fore our  
fenc - es to for - give, have not lis - tened to their  
proof of hu - man need; and our lack of un - der -



Mak - er in con - tri - tion for our  
trou - bles, nor have cared just how they  
stand - ing dem - on - strates our in - ner



sins. We have marred bap - tis - mal pledg - es, in re -  
live, we are jeal - ous, proud, im - pa - tient, lov - ing  
greed; we have wast - ed earth's re - sourc - es; want and



bel - lion gone a - stray; now, re - turn - ing, seek for -  
o - ver - much our things; may the yield - ing of our  
suf - fering we've ig - nored; come and cleanse us, then re -



give - ness; grant us par - don, God, this day!  
fail - ings be our Len - ten of - fer - ings.  
store us; make new hearts with - in us, Lord!

*\*The first line of the hymn recalls the custom of burning remaining palm leaves of the previous year to form the ashes for this observance.*

WORDS: Rae E. Whitney  
MUSIC: Attr. to B. F. White

BEACH SPRING  
87.87 D

Confession

Leader: Creator God, you fashioned us out of dust,  
breathing your Spirit into us,  
so we might sing your praise.

Right: But we have denounced your gift of life  
in order to be our own gods,  
clinging to death-dealing idols of our own making.

Left: We have denied our creaturely status,  
seeking to lord it over those we label “less-than.”

Right: We squelch all who are different  
through ignoring, belittling, murdering, and bombing.

Left: We believe survival-of-the-fittest lies,  
discounting the weak,  
and profiting by others’ pain.

Not trusting in your providence,  
we stop our ears to cries of those in need  
because we’re afraid we won’t have enough.

Right: We have been unfaithful stewards, O Lord.

Left: We live in a state of sin among a people of sin.

Right: Save for your grace, we perish.

Left: Remember our making, Creator God;  
remember we are dust.

**All: Have mercy on us according to your loving kindness.  
Breathe new life into us once more,  
so we might be the people you created us to be.  
Restore unto us the joy of your salvation**

**that we might do justice, love kindness,  
and walk humbly with the Lord Jesus Christ,  
in whose name we pray, Amen.**

*Silence is kept.*

Imposition of Ashes

*Those who so desire may come forward to receive an imposition of ashes as a sign of penitence not only for our individual sin, but also in recognition of our complicity in the sin of the world.*

Assurance (responsive)

Ezekiel 36: 25-27

Hear the promise of God: I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.” Friends, the promises of God are true:

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross

**that we might be dead to sin and alive to all that is good.**

In the name of Jesus Christ you are forgiven.

Live now as new people, free to love God and neighbor.

## Word

Anthem

*Lamb of God*

Twila Harris  
Chancel Choir

Scripture Reading

Psalm 103

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and all that is within me,  
bless his holy name.

2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and do not forget all his benefits—

3 who forgives all your iniquity,  
who heals all your diseases,

4 who redeems your life from the Pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

5 who satisfies you with good as long as you live<sup>[a]</sup>  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The Lord works vindication  
and justice for all who are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways to Moses,  
his acts to the people of Israel.

8 The Lord is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

9 He will not always accuse,  
nor will he keep his anger forever.

10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

12 as far as the east is from the west,

so far he removes our transgressions from us.

13 As a father has compassion for his children,  
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.

14 For he knows how we were made;  
he remembers that we are dust.

15 As for mortals, their days are like grass;  
they flourish like a flower of the field;

16 for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
and its place knows it no more.

17 But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting  
on those who fear him,  
and his righteousness to children's children,

18 to those who keep his covenant  
and remember to do his commandments.

19 The Lord has established his throne in the heavens,  
and his kingdom rules over all.

20 Bless the Lord, O you his angels,  
you mighty ones who do his bidding,  
obedient to his spoken word.

21 Bless the Lord, all his hosts,  
his ministers that do his will.

22 Bless the Lord, all his works,  
in all places of his dominion.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Reflection  
Kanerva

Rev. Liz Rolf

## Eucharist

+Hymn 428  
*Lord*

*Before I Take the Body of My*

### Invitation

Sacraments are embodiments of the good news of God's Word, so you're invited to stop by the font on your way to the table to remember that while you may be dust, you are baptized dust. You are so precious to God that our Lord has been broken so that you might know the wholeness of eternal life. He was baptized with the baptism of death, drinking to the empty dregs the cup God placed before him, so that we might know life in all its fullness. This bread of life, this cup of blessing are set before us to nourish us as the body of Christ's blessing for the world. So come, let us join in this foretaste of the meal of God's Kingdom, spread out for us as we serve and are served in Christ's name.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving (responsive)

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, eternal God, creator and ruler of the universe.

**You hold all our days in your hand,  
the same hand that spangled stars in  
the sky and shaped dust into human form.**

You breathed your life into us earthlings,  
and set us in your world to love and serve you.

**But we reject your love.**

Yet you continue to woo us, calling us through prophets to return to a covenant of



love with you. Therefore, with all of creation, the heavenly angels, and all saints, we lift our voices in praise:

**Chancel Choir**

*Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.*

We praise you that you sent Jesus to capture us with your love.

**Living as one of us, baptized in Holy Spirit, he taught us your Way.**

Even as our sin was betraying him, he sat at table with his disciples and took bread and blessed it and broke it, saying,

**This is my body, which is given for you.**

**Do this in remembrance of me.**

Then he took a cup, and said,

**“Take this and divide it among yourselves,  
for I will not drink of the fruit of the vine  
until the kingdom of God comes.”**

We remember your faithfulness unto death, O Lord, and look with awe upon your tortured love bleeding accursed upon a tree.

**We celebrate Christ’s rising that released us from bondage to sin.**

Following you into the promised dominion of God, we confidently sing the mystery of faith:

**Chancel Choir**

*Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.*

Thank you, for the gift of this table set as a sign of your Kingdom in our midst.

**Come now, Holy Spirit, and move among us**

that we might perceive your presence and our union with all the saints of all times and places as we partake of this covenant meal of your dominion.

**We offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice,  
devoted to following you and praying for the hungry world  
you call us to serve as your body.**

Lord's Prayer

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Chancel Choir**

*Amen. Amen. Amen.*

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Is not the bread we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ?

Remembrance of Baptism and Communion of the People

On the approach to the table, people will stop at the font to remember their baptism. Those who imposed ashes earlier will be there to trace the sign of the cross again on their forehead with baptismal water. White cloths may be needed as well to wipe smudges from foreheads.

As this is done, leaders say: **Remember your baptism. and/or You are marked as Christ's own forever.**

Then communicants proceed to stations to receive communion by intinction.  
**Remember that Jesus Christ, your Savior, died for you and the whole world, and be thankful.**<sup>2</sup>

Sending

+Hymn 441

*Hear the Good News of Salvation*

+Blessing and Charge

May the God of peace  
make you holy in every way  
and keep your whole being -  
spirit, soul, and body -  
free from every fault  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

*Abide with Me*  
Monk arr. Alexander

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Ash Wednesday Service, Presbyterian Mission Agency, PC(USA)

*Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes* Sing the Faith, 2138

Blessing and Charge, Book of Common Worship, PC(USA)

Unless otherwise noted, all hymns and service music are found in the Glory to God Hymnal.