



## **Ash Wednesday**

March 6, 2023

St. John's Powell

## Ministers

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Worship Leader | Megan Nickles  |
| Reader         | Jim McEvoy     |
| Preacher       | Diana Anderson |
| Intercessor    | Debora Smith   |
| Sound          | Steve Nickles  |
| Altar Guild    | Mary Dillivan  |
| Fire Tender    | Kim Dillivan   |

## Ash Wednesday

In the Christian church, Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, occurring six and a half weeks before Easter (between February 4 and March 11, depending on the date of Easter).

Ash Wednesday is a solemn reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation with God and marks the beginning of the penitential Lenten season. It is commonly observed with ashes and fasting.

## Sources

**Gathering** is from Common Worship, © 2002 Church House, London.

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**Litany of Penance** is from The Book of Common Prayer, © 1979 Church Publishing, New York, New York.

**Affirmation** Nathan Nettleton (©2000) [laughingbird.net](http://laughingbird.net). The responses at the end come from Stages on the Way by the Wild Goose Worship Group. ©1998, WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow G51 3UU, Scotland.

# Gathering

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;  
O my God, in you I trust.  
You are the God of my salvation;  
To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.  
Remember, Lord, your compassion and love,  
for they are from everlasting.  
To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;  
O my God, in you I trust.

# Psalm

<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd.  
I will always have everything I need.  
<sup>2</sup>He gives me green pastures to lie in.  
He leads me by calm pools of water.  
<sup>3</sup>He restores my strength.  
He leads me on right paths to show that he is good.  
<sup>4</sup>Even if I walk through a valley as dark as the grave,  
I will not be afraid of any danger, because you are with me.  
Your rod and staff comfort me.  
<sup>5</sup>You prepared a meal for me in front of my enemies.  
You welcomed me as an honored guest.  
My cup is full and spilling over.  
<sup>6</sup>Your goodness and mercy will be with me all my life,  
and I will live in the Lord's house a long, long time.

# Scripture

*We sit.*  
O Lord, may the words of your mouth be our daily bread,  
and may your leading Spirit become our way; in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

*After the Reading*

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

# Sermon

## Blessing of Ashes

Bless, O God, these ashes and those who receive them.  
Let them be for us a reminder of our mortality,  
a call to sincere repentance, and a testimony to your abundant mercy  
in Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*We stand. The bowl of ashes is passed from one to another.*

*Mark a cross, using the words, "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

## Litany of Penitence

Most holy and merciful God: 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; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

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.

**Have mercy on us, Lord.**

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us.

We have not been true to the mind of Christ.

**Have mercy on us, Lord.**

We confess to you all our past unfaithfulness:  
the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,

**We confess to you, Lord.**

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

**We confess to you, Lord.**

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

**We confess to you, Lord.**

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

**We confess to you, Lord.**

Accept our repentance for the wrongs we have done:  
for our blindness to human need and suffering,  
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

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

**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

For our waste and pollution of your creation,  
and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

**That we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

**Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

Almighty God, who desires not the death of sinners,  
but rather that we may turn from our brokenness and live,  
pardons and absolves all of us who truly repent,  
and with sincere hearts believe his holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech God

to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit,  
that those things which we do on this day may be pleasing,  
and that the rest of our life hereafter may be good and holy,  
so that at the last we may come to eternal joy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

# Dust and Ashes

## Verses



1. Dust and ash - es touch our face, mark our fail - ure and our  
2. Dust and ash - es soil our hands— greed of mar - ket, pride of  
3. Dust and ash - es choke our tongue in the waste - land of de -



fall - ing. Ho - ly Spir - it, come, walk with us to - mor - row,  
na - tion. Ho - ly Spir - it, come, walk with us to - mor - row,  
pres - sion. Ho - ly Spir - it, come, walk with us to - mor - row,



take us as dis - ci - ples, washed and wak - ened by your call - ing.  
as we pray and strug - gle through the mesh - es of op - pres - sion.  
through all gloom and griev - ing to the paths of res - ur - rec - tion.

## Refrain



Take us by the hand and lead us, lead us through the des - ert sands,



bring us liv - ing wa - ter, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.

Text: Brian Wren, b.1936, © 1989, Hope Publishing Co.  
Tune: David Haas, b.1957, © 1991, GIA Publications, Inc.

# Affirmation

We believe in God, creator of all that is and shall be,  
redeemer of all that is less than it could be,  
sustainer of our living, our loving, our being.

We believe in the cross of Christ,  
drenched in hatred and cruelty,  
yet overflowing with God's unquenchable love.

We believe in the pain suffered by Christ:  
all our hurts, torments and betrayals  
magnified in the purity of love,  
and embraced that we might be free.

We believe in the joy of the Holy Spirit,  
poured into the hearts of those who,  
with courage and resolve,  
refuse to trade integrity for popularity.

We believe in the Gospel, good news offered to us in Jesus,  
despised by the world but leading us in the way of life.

We believe in love: the nature of God, a gift unsurpassed,  
but a mystery only fulfilled when all else is relinquished.

We believe in light shining from darkness,  
in mercy vanquishing bitterness,  
in life bursting free where death reigned.

How then shall we live? How shall this faith take flesh in the world?

The cross? **We will take it.**

The bread? **We will break it.**

The pain? **We will bear it.**

The joy? **We will share it.**

The Gospel? **We will live it.**

The love? **We will give it.**

The light? **We will cherish it.**

The darkness? **God shall perish it.**

**Amen.**

## **Sending**

May the steadfast love of God surround you  
throughout these forty days and into everlasting life.

Go in the peace of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Burn it Up**

*We move to the bonfire.*

*You may sit in the sanctuary to reflect before you come to the fire.*