

IMPOSITION OF EARTH AND ASHES

Please come forward if you wish to receive ashes on this sacred night. The ashes will be marked on your forehead or hand with the sign of the cross. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marks the repentance and healing of this community.

"Remember that you are from earth, and to earth you shall return."

SENDING HYMN NO. 836

Abide With Me (verses 1, 3, & 5)

EVENTIDE

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE - *Abide With Me*

William H. Monk, arr. Zach Unke

Worship Leaders:

Rev. Jeff Lehn, pastoral liturgist

Rev. Laura Sherwood, pastoral liturgist

Peggy Massello, Director of Music

Chancel Choir

NOTE ABOUT THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Ashes have a long history in biblical and church traditions. In Scripture, ashes or dust symbolize frailty or death (Gen. 18:27), sadness or mourning (Esther 4:3), judgment (Lam. 3:16), and repentance (Jon. 3:6). Some traditions also have considered ash a purifying or cleansing agent. (drawn from *The Worship Sourcebook [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004], 541*).

This year, in light of our Lenten theme, "For the Beauty of the Earth," we will be using alternative language for the imposition of ashes. Instead of saying, "Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return" (adapted from Genesis 3:19), we will say, "Remember that you are earth, and to earth you shall return." Genesis 2:7 says, "Then the Lord God formed man (adam) from the dust of the ground (adamah)." In this Hebrew wordplay, we remember that we human beings are image-bearers of God, made of the same stuff as the earth, and so our fates are bound together. We are called to be stewards of the earth from which we were made.



"Blessing the Dust," Jan Richardson

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WILMETTE
Ash Wednesday

March 2, 2022
6:30 pm Worship Service

Experience God, Grow Disciples. Transform Lives.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the dimness of evening,

To be with God who brightens the shadows of our lives.

We gather in the quiet of this place,

To be with Jesus, knowing that nothing past, present or future separates us.

We gather to be marked as disciples,

To be fed for the journey through Lent, to be sealed by the Spirit as God's own.

OPENING HYMN NO. 421 (verses 1, 3, & 5)

Have Mercy, God, upon My Life

IRISH

CALL TO CONFESSION

On this night, we begin our journey to Easter. Before we can take the first step, we must admit how we have not been faithful to our loving God, first in silent prayer...

(silence is kept)...

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (responsive)

Holy One, we believe that we were created in love, yet when we face ourselves in the mirror, too often we do not see love. For our prejudice, for our hatred, for our pride, for our apathy, for our blindness:

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Holy One, we believe we are created in your image, but when we look in the mirror, we do not see anything good. For our hollow sense of self, for our inflated ego, for our inner critic, for our needless stoicism, for our sense of worthlessness, for our inability to see ourselves as beloved:

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Holy One, we believe we are called to see the face of Christ in all, but we refuse to see Christ in some. For holding on to old resentments, for calling another 'enemy,' for allowing the color of one's skin to influence us, for negating the other names by which you are called, for seeing borders as fences and not invitations to explore, for not living the truth that the whole world is in your hands: **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God refuses to stand far off, but comes close to us - to hear our prayers, to touch our hearts with forgiveness, and to walk with us during this holy season and beyond.

We have no need to go anyplace else but into the comforting and restoring heart of the one who loves us. Thanks be to God. We are forgiven. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE HYMN NO. 576 (choir 1st time, congregation 2nd time.)

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy on us.

SCRIPTURE READINGS - Genesis 1:9-13 and Psalm 51:1-4, 10-12

READINGS - "A Little Dust on Your Forehead"

"Blessing the Dust"

Leah Schade

Jan Richardson

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

ANTHEM - *Before I Take the Body of My Lord*

(text can be found at Hymn No. 428)

John L. Bell

PRAYER AROUND THE LORD'S TABLE

May the God of earth and ashes be with you.

And also with you.

On this night, let us offer our hearts to God.

We open them so we may be filled with the gifts of Lenten discipleship.

Let us lift glad thanksgiving to our God.

We offer praise to the One who gives us the strength for this journey.

Let us continue in prayer...

There at the edge of the emptiness of chaos you spoke, God of all graciousness...

...And when neither death nor life can keep us apart from you, as you gather us around your Table with our siblings in every time and place, we will sing your glory and praise forever and ever, God in Community, Holy and One, who taught us also to pray, saying,

THE 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 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.

BLESSING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE - *The gifts of God, for the People of God*