

God of light and dust be with you, **And also with you.**
Open wide our hearts: **We open them up to our God.**
Let us give thanks to God our creator.
Even in the midst of the wilderness, we give God our praise.

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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 AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Please come forward, as you're able, to receive communion by intinction (tearing a piece of bread and dipping it in the cup) from the servers and the imposition of ashes to the side of the table. If you're not able to come forward, we will serve you and offer ashes at your seat.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Even as we come to the table tonight remembering our frailty with the dust on our heads, we also give God our thanks for this meal. We give our gratitude that we have come together as one Body of Christ. In these next 40 days and as we walk the road to the crucifixion, continue to keep us awake to the ways we can bring Jesus the Christ's servant-leadership to our world. Amen.*

SENDING HYMN NO. 433 - *Sign Us With Ashes* (cong. sing refrain, choir sing vs. 4-6))

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE - *Amazing Grace*

Columbian Harmony

Worship Leaders:

Rev. Jeff Lehn, pastoral liturgist

Linea Jacobs, Flute

Rev. Kara Smith-Laubenstein, pastoral liturgist

Wonee Kim, Accompanist

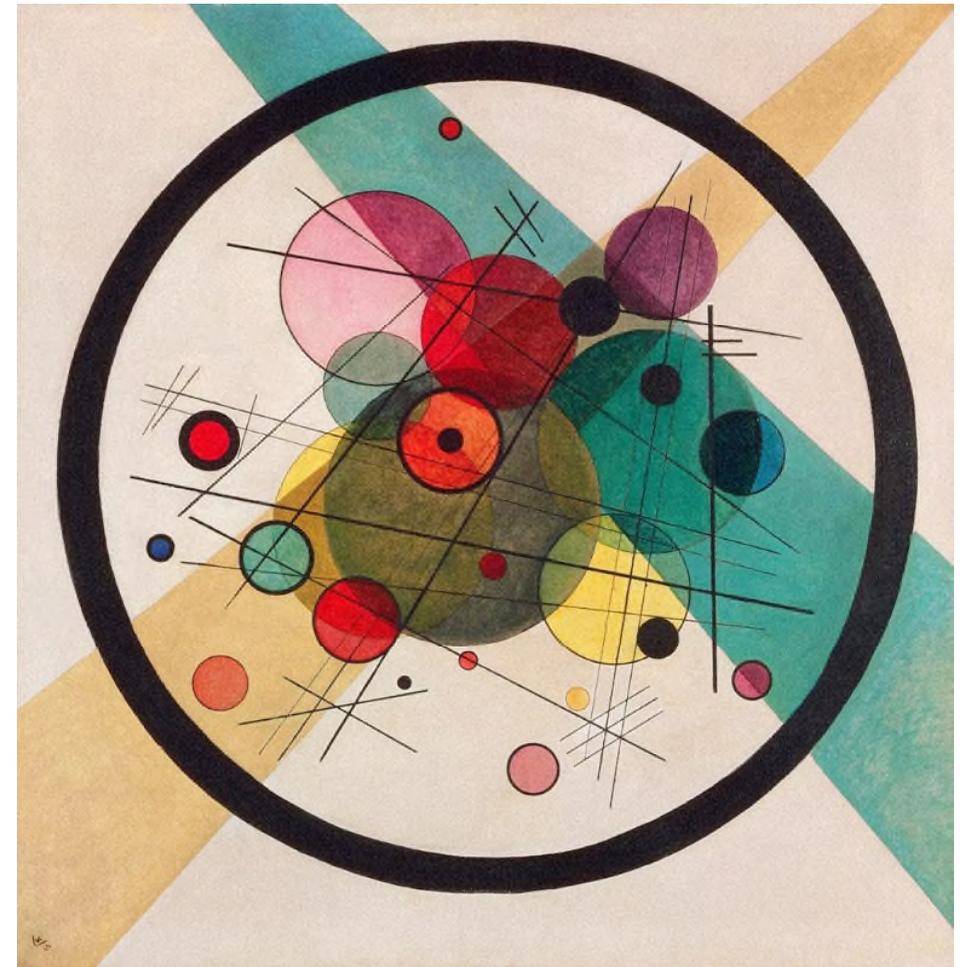
Peggy Massello, Director of Music

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*). In this reminder of our mortality, we are also empowered to bear God's image in the world as we journey through life, sharing God's love with all we meet.

*Communion liturgy adapted from Rev. Michelle L. Torigian (michelletorigian.com)



Wassily Kandinsky, "Circles in a Circle" (1923)

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WILMETTE
Ash Wednesday

February 22, 2023
6:45 pm Worship Service

Experience God, Grow Disciples. Transform Lives.

PRELUDE - *Abide With Me* William

H. Monk, arr. Zach Unke

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 - *Return to God*

Stephen Pishner

Refrain

Re - turn to God with all your heart, the
Source of grace and mer - cy; come seek the ten - der
faith - ful - ness of God.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 3/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the refrain. The second staff contains the melody for the second line. The third staff contains the melody for the third line, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots. The lyrics are written below the notes.

1. Now the time of grace has come, the day of salvation; come and learn now the way of our God. (*Refrain twice*)
2. I will take your heart of stone and place a heart within you, a heart of compassion and love. (*Refrain twice*)
3. If you break the chains of oppression, if you set the prisoner free; if you share your bread with the hungry, give protection to the lost; give a shelter to the homeless, clothe the naked in your midst, then your light will break froth like the dawn. (*Refrain twice*)

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...

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. 791 - *For you, My God, I Wait*, vs. 6 sing twice

O God, you are my hope; I know that you forgive.

Your love redeems me from the depths so I may rise and live.

SCRIPTURE READINGS - Psalm 51:1-4, Joel 2:12-16a, Matthew 6:1-4

READINGS - "Called to Become"

Edwina Gateley

"Hope is Not Cause and Effect"

MaryAnn McKibben Dana

"Blessing for Ash Wednesday"

Jan Richardson

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

ANTHEM - *Lord, Have Mercy*

William Byrd, arr. Hal H. Hopson

Lord, have mercy; according to your love, renew my heart, O God.

Restore your peace and joy, O Lord, I will praise you forever.

~text based on Psalm 51:1a, 12a

PRAYER AROUND THE LORD'S TABLE

Come, as we embark on the journey set before us in this new season.

Come, as we reflect upon the dusk of our lives.

Come, as we set aside our distractions and the concerns of our minds.

Come, as we focus on the heart of the matter.

Come to this table as you are, for you are wanted and welcomed here.