



ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday is one of the most serious and solemn days in the Christian year. The mood is one of penitence and reflection on the quality of our faith and life. Its goal is participation in the Lenten discipline, which prepares us for the Easter celebration.

The ashes are a sign of our mortality and are traditionally applied with the words ‘You are dust and to dust you shall return.’ The ashes also suggest cleansing and renewal. In ancient times, ashes were used when soap was unavailable. As we begin our Lenten discipline with the ashes on our forehead, we witness our commitment to let this Lenten season be a time of spiritual renewal for us.

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Welcome and Announcements

Opening Litany:

One: Death and darkness hide in too many corners of our world. Children go to bed hungry. Dissident voices are locked up in prisons. Armaments are stockpiled, while assault weapons terrorize our streets. Fear haunts our cities. We long for freedom and release, for justice and peace.

All: Let us enter into Lent with all our hearts so we don't forget the One who has sustained us through all times and seasons.

One: Families are pushed and pulled by economics and activities. We pack our calendars and strain our relationships. Tragedies and accidents upset the fragile balance we hold.

All: Let us not forget the One who invites us to come away awhile for a rest.

One: Grievances linger, resentments smolder, tensions mount, our personal faith gets challenged and we long for divine guidance or at least some breathing space.

All: Yet God is with us through it all, the One who has blessed us with hope and forgiveness.

Opening Song: Turn to Me with All Your Heart
(music at end of bulletin)

The Confession:

L: Brothers and Sisters: We were created to experience joy in communion with God, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we sadden our Father, who does not desire us to come under judgment, but to repent and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from the love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love - the disciplines of Lent - help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking God for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination.)

L: Most holy and merciful Father:

C: 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.

L: 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.

C: Have mercy on us, Lord.

L: 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.

C: Have mercy on us, Lord.

L: We confess to you, Lord, our past unfaithfulness; the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives.

C: We confess to you, Lord.

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

C: We confess to you, Lord.

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

C: We confess to you, Lord.

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

C: We confess to you Lord.

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

C: Accept our repentance, Lord.

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

C: Accept our repentance, Lord.

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

C: Accept our repentance, Lord.

L: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

C: Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen.

Silence for Meditation and Reflection

Many of you cannot experience the ashes this year because of our need for physical distancing, but you can close your eyes, imagine the imposition of ashes made from Palms of the previous Palm Sunday and hear the words, the solemn words, “You are dust and to dust you shall return.” But these ashes are applied in the shape of a cross the reminder of forgiveness and new life in our Lord. Let us take a moment to reflect on the importance of this symbol.

L: Let us pray. On this day of ashes, we come in repentance and sorrow for all our offenses against you and others. As we dare to worship you, we seek your forgiveness that our sins may be removed and our spirits made clean and whole. Purify us, and enable us to walk in joy and gladness once again. All of this we ask in the name of the One who came to deliver us from sin and death. **Amen.**

Scripture:

Psalm 90

Lord, you have been our dwelling-place in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You turn us back to dust,
and say, “Turn back, you mortals.”
For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past,
or like a watch in the night.

You sweep them away; they are like a dream,
like grass that is renewed in the morning;
in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.

For we are consumed by your anger;
by your wrath we are overwhelmed.
You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

For all our days pass away under your wrath;
our years come to an end like a sigh.
The days of our life are seventy years,
or perhaps eighty, if we are strong;
even then their span is only toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.

Who considers the power of your anger?
Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due to you.
So teach us to count our days
that we may gain a wise heart.

Turn, O Lord! How long?
Have compassion on your servants!
Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
and for as many years as we have seen evil.
Let your work be manifest to your servants,
and your glorious power to their children.
Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
and prosper for us the work of our hands—
O prosper the work of our hands!

1 Corinthians 15:53-58

For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

‘Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?’

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

John 12:23-32

Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow

me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

‘Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—“Father, save me from this hour”? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to him.’ Jesus answered, ‘This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.’

The Message: ***“The Only Things That Are Sure Are Death and...”***

Song: ***Abide with Me (music at end of bulletin)***

The Prayers of the People

Communion Instructions and the Words of Institution

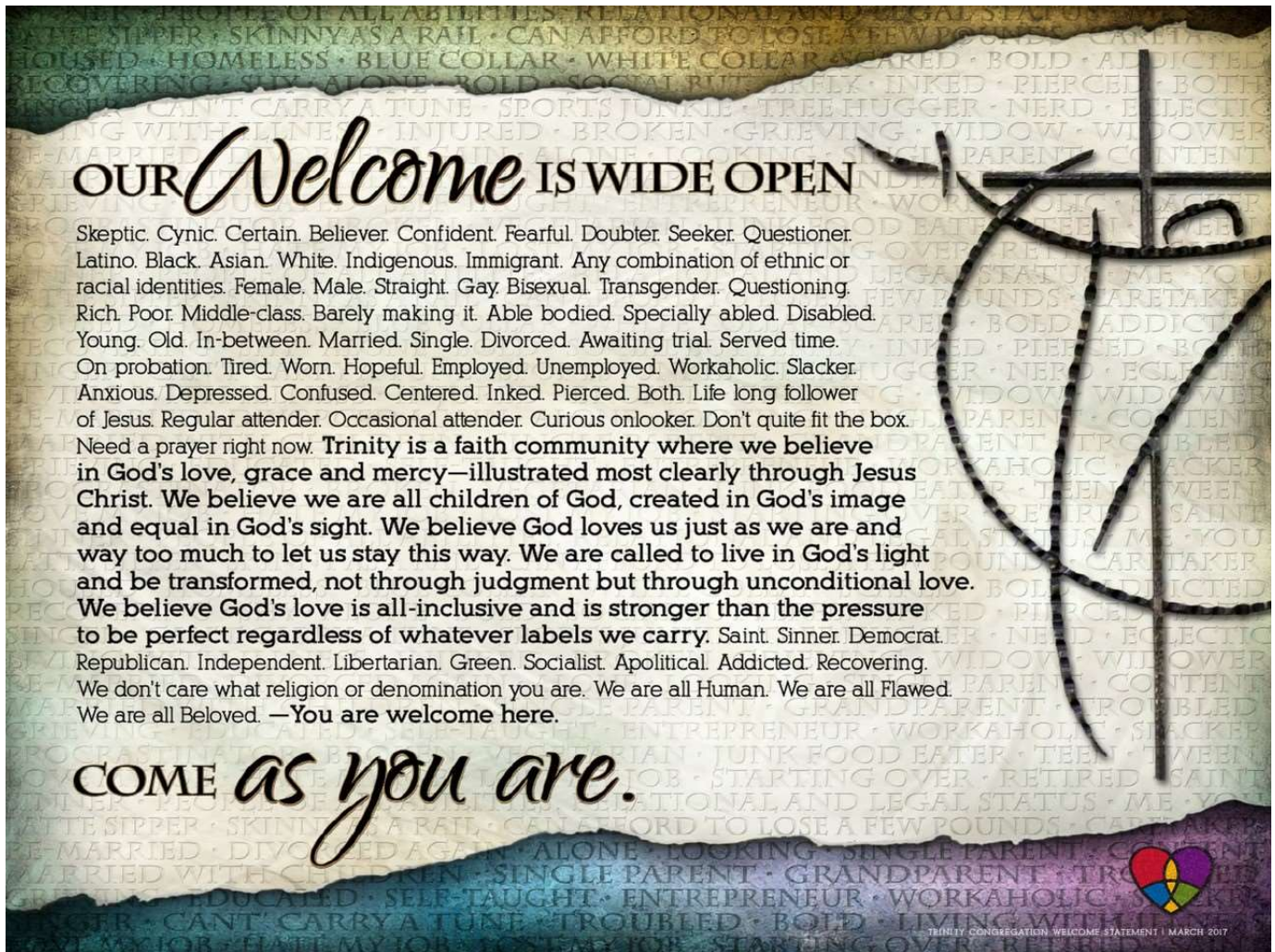
The Lord's Prayer:

C: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The Blessing

The Closing Song: Come and Find the Quiet Center
(music at end of bulletin)

The Benediction



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Dm Am/C B \flat A B \flat C F A

Turn to me with all your heart; come with fast-ing and weep-ing.
 Turn to me, your gra-cious Lord; come for mer-cy and bless-ing.
 Turn to me! As - sem-ble now! Gath - er chil-dren and in - fants.
 Turn to me; be sat - is - fied. I'll no long-er re - ject you.

Dm Gm Dm A B \flat Dm/G Gm Asus A 7 Dm

Come with spir - its torn a - part, se - crets you've been keep - ing.
 En - ter now the o - pen door, all your sins con - fes - sing.
 Blow the trum-pet; speak your vows, then re - ceive for - give - ness.
 Come, for I a - lone pro - vide, guard you, and pro - tect you.



1 A - bide with me, fast falls the e - ven - tide.
 2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;
 3 I need thy pres - ence ev - 'ry pass - ing hour;
 4 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
 5 Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes,



The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide.
 earth's joys grow dim, its glo - ries pass a - way;
 what but thy grace can foil the tempt - er's pow'r?
 ills have no weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness.
 shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;



When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,
 change and de - cay in all a - round I see;
 Who like thy - self my guide and stay can be?
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy vic - to - ry?
 heav'n's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain shad - ows flee;



help of the help - less, oh, a - bide with me.
 O thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me.
 Through cloud and sun - shine, oh, a - bide with me.
 I tri - umph still, if thou a - bide with me!
 in life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me.



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F Gm F Dm Bb C Bb F

1 Come and find the qui - et cen - ter in the crowd - ed life we lead,
 2 Si - lence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,
 3 In the Spir - it let us trav - el, o - pen to each oth - er's pain,

F Gm F Dm Bb C7 Bb F

find the room for hope to en - ter, find the frame where we are freed:
 God it is who speaks and names us, knows our be - ing, touch - es base,
 let our loves and fears un - rav - el, cel - e - brate the space we gain:

F C Dm F Bb

clear the cha - os and the clut - ter, clear our eyes, that we can see
 mak - ing space with - in our think - ing, lift - ing shades to show the sun,
 there's a place for deep - est dream - ing, there's a time for heart to care,

C Dm Bb F Gm Am Bb F

all the things that real - ly mat - ter, be at peace, and sim - ply be.
 rais - ing cour - age when we're shrink - ing, find - ing scope for faith be - gun.
 in the Spir - it's live - ly schem - ing there is al - ways room to spare!