**Worship Plan for Wednesday, February 22, 2023** **\* Ash Wednesday**

**Introduction to the day**

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

**Gathering:** The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Welcome to this Ash Wednesday worship as we begin our Lenten Journey together.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**And now please turn to page 608**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Gathering Hymn:*Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling* (ELW 608)**

**Word** God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**First Reading:** Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

### 1Blow 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—2a 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. 12Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 13rend 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. 14Who 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? 15Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; 16gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. 17Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, “Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’ ”

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**PsalmODY:** Psalm 51:1-17

1Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

2**Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.**

3For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

4**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

5Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother’s womb.

6**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

7Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

8**Let me hear joy and gladness; that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

9Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

10**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

11Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

12**Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

13Let me teach your ways to offenders, and sinners shall be restored to you.

14**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

15O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

16**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

17The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

**Amen.**

**Second Reading:** 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10

20bWe entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 6:1As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2For he says, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.” See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! 3We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation (ELW p. 252)**

**Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

**Gospel:** Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

**The holy gospel according to Matthew. Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 1“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 3But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 5“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 6But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 16“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 17But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 19“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; 20but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

**And now please turn to hymn 185**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Hymn of the Day:*Create in Me a Clean Heart* (ELW 185)**

**Invitation to Lent:** Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus’ passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God’s mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

**Confession of Sin**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most holy and merciful God,

**we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven,**

**that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous 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, O God.**

We have shut our ears 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.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

**Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: Prayers of Intercession**

Sustained by God’s abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

O Lord, our God, you gather your church and call us to return to you. Accompany us throughout our Lenten pilgrimage. Create in us clean hearts and renew all the baptized to declare your praise. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Renew your creation, O God. Bring rains to parched places and heal lands affected by a changing climate, that all inhabitants of the earth experience your abundance. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Renew the nations, O God. Give voice to those on the margins and resolve to world leaders who seek to protect those most vulnerable. Loosen the bonds of injustice and bring an end to all violence, oppression, and persecution. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Renew your people, O God. Respond to those who cry out to you in secret or in seclusion. Equip us with compassion to care for those who experience homelessness, food insecurity, economic hardship, and illness, especially Ashlee, Nancy Blackmer; JoLynne Buehring; Arnette Calkins; Vicki Crow; Stephanie DeSimone; Carole Erickson; the Espinoza family; Marge Fulton; Kally Homchick; Mimi Houghtaling; Jean Miles; Sandra Miller; Thordis Moe; Carol Morris; Sheila Neal; Elaine Olsen; Wilma Parker; Andrew Quinn; JoAnne Schriock; Bill and Dee Seel; Amy Sinclair; Joyce Stromberg; Jim and Kay Thomas; the Varsobia family; Diana Ward; the homebound; the Emergency responders; and those grieving and anticipating surgery/tests. We especially pray for those affected by COVID-19 and those who have lost loved ones. At this time we also pray for those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Renew this congregation, O God. Inspire our faith formation ministries and those who teach and lead. Invigorate us with lifelong curiosity and wonder as we grow as your disciples. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, we give thanks for all your faithful ones of every time and place. Renew us by the example of their lives of prayer and service, and at the last, bring us with them into your everlasting presence. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

**Offering:** At this time, we remember that the giving of our offering is an authentic part of worship. Thank you so much for all the ways you give and help to make the ministries of this church possible!

**ASSISTING MINISTER: Offering Prayer**

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Musical Offering:*O Lord, throughout These Forty Days* (ELW 319)**

**Meal:** God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**Great Thanksgiving**

**INSTRUCTION FOR COMMUNION**

As you are comfortable, you are invited to come forward to receive communion. All of God's children are welcome to Christ's table.

Gather at the altar rail to receive the communion elements or if you wish to receive a blessing, please cross your arms over your chest. You may commune yourself once you've received the communion elements. Please commune the bread first, turn over the vessel and then carefully open the grape juice. A gluten-free option is available upon request. Please deposit empty cups in the provided baskets on your way back to your seat.

If you would like communion brought to you at your seat, indicate by raising your hand for the Assisting Minister to see and they will bring communion to you.

**Dialogue**

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 indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow’r and might: Heav’n 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.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one. Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ. Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

 Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord’s passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

**Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**Imposition of Ashes**

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

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

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

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

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

**Amen.**

**Invitation to Communion**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**Hymn During Ashes:*Just As I Am, without One Plea* (ELW 592)**

**DURING DISTRIBUTION:*One Bread, One Body* (ELW 496)**

**Communion**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

**Prayer**

Let us pray.

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**And now please turn to hymn 327**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Sending Hymn:*Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow* (ELW 327)**

**Sending:** God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**Blessing**

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: Dismissal**

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Invitation**

The Church Council Members and I would like to invite guests and visitors to come and meet us in the narthex as you exit so that we can meet and welcome you. 

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