

Blessing the Dust: A Blessing for Ash Wednesday

All those days you felt like dust,
like dirt,
as if all you had to do
was turn your face
toward the wind
and be scattered
to the four corners
or swept away
by the smallest breath as insubstantial—

Did you not know what the Holy One
can do with dust?

This is the day we freely say
we are scorched.

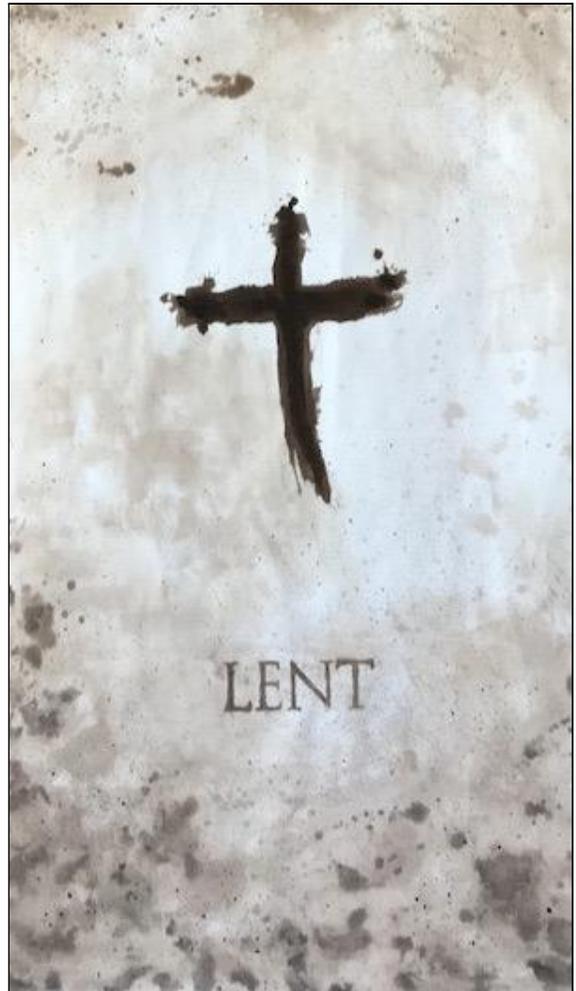
This is the hour we are marked
by what has made it
through the burning.
This is the moment we ask for the blessing
that lives within the ancient ashes,
that makes its home inside the soil of
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked not for sorrow.

And let us be marked not for shame.

Let us be marked not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less than we are
but for claiming what God can do
within the dust, within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made,
and the stars that blaze in our bones,
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.

Jan Richardson



*A Service of Worship for
Ash Wednesday
2 March 2022*

please enter for worship in silence

Preparing for worship with silence
Gathering in peace

Peace be with you.
And also with you.

Ring in the hour
Silence is kept

*Prelude

Ernest Bloch

“Prayer”

BEING CALLED TO WORSHIP

Gathering Words

SINGING A HYMN TOGETHER

+Hymn #353

Das neugeborne Kindelein
“The newborn child”

“Great God, Your Love Has Called Us Here”
(Verses 1-3)

**Great God, Your love has called us here
As we, by love, for love were made.
Your living likeness still we bear,
Though marred, dishonored, disobeyed.
We come, with all our heart and mind
Your call to hear, Your love to find.**

**We come with self-inflicted pains
Of broken trust and chosen wrong.
Half-free, half-bound by inner chains,
By social forces swept along,
By powers and systems close confined
Yet seeking hope for humankind.**

**Great God, in Christ You call our name
And then receive us as Your own
Not through some merit, right, or claim
But by Your gracious love alone.
We strain to glimpse Your mercy seat
And find You kneeling at our feet.**

*Ushers will seat latecomers

+Please stand in body or spirit

LISTENING TO SACRED STORIES

Scripture

Psalm 19:12-14

Luke 4:1-13

Music

John Purifoy

“Create in Me”

Create in me a clean heart O God,
and renew a right spirit within me, I pray.
Restore to me now the joy of salvation
and hold me with Thy free spirit.

REMEMBERING OUR MORTALITY

Poem

William Loader

“A Prayer for Ash Wednesday”

Scripture

Genesis 3:19

Blessing the Ashes

Imposing the Ashes

Music

Pablo Casals

A Piece for Cello

REMEMBERING OUR FALLIBILITY

Scripture

Psalm 139:1-10

Call to Confession

Silence

Unison Confession

Kate Bowler

**I can't reconcile the way that the world is jolted
by events that are wonderful and terrible,
the gorgeous and the tragic.**

**Except that I am beginning to believe
that these opposites do not cancel each other out.**

**I see a middle aged woman in the waiting room of the cancer clinic,
her arms wrapped around the frail frame of her son.**

**She squeezes him tightly,
oblivious to the way he looks down at her sheepishly.**

He laughs after a minute, a hostage to her impervious love.

Joy persists somehow and I soak it in.

**The horror of cancer has made everything seem like it is painted in bright colors.
I think the same thoughts again and again.**

Life is so beautiful. Life is so hard.

“Call to Remembrance”
Call to remembrance, O Lord,
Thy tender mercy and thy loving kindness
Which hath been ever of old.
Oh, remember not the sins and offenses of my youth,
But according to thy mercy
Think thou on me, O Lord, for thy goodness.

BEING CALLED TO A SEASON OF AWARENESS

Scripture

Isaiah 58:6-12

+Hymn #374

Dickinson College

“Lord Make Us Servants of Your Peace”

**Lord, make us servants of Your peace;
Where there is hate, may we sow love;
Where there is hurt, may we forgive;
Where there is strife, may we make one.**

**Where all is doubt, may we sow faith;
Where all is gloom, may we sow hope;
Where all is night, may we sow light;
Where all is tears, may we sow joy.**

**Jesus, our Lord, may we not seek
To be consoled, but to console,
Nor look to understanding hearts,
But look for hearts to understand.**

**May we not look for love’s return,
But seek to love unselfishly,
For in our giving we receive,
And in forgiving are forgiv’n.**

Poem

Parker J. Palmer

“Everything Falls Away”

“My Song in the Night”

O Jesus my Savior, my song in the night,
 Come to us with Thy tender love, my soul’s delight.
 Unto Thee, O Lord in affliction I call,
 my comfort by day and my song in the night.
 O why should I wander, an alien from Thee,
 or cry in the desert Thy face to see,
 my comfort and joy, my soul’s delight
 O Jesus my Savior, my song in the night.

Departing Words

This Evening's Service

Our service is led by: **Laura Mayo**, Senior Minister; **David Lee**, Director of Music; **Lewis Garvin**, **Karen Kline**, **Kristy Kyle**, **Linda Phenix**, and **Nancy Preston**; **Susan Wegner**, cellist; The Covenant Singers.

The banners were made by Nancy Henry.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday occurs on the Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter and serves as the first day of the Christian season of Lent. The day derives its name from the ceremonial imposition of ashes on the foreheads of worshippers, a rite that goes back to at least the tenth century. The use of ashes to symbolize penitence and mortality has references in both Hebrew and Christian scripture and is common to many other religious traditions.

*Covenant Church affirms the sanctity, dignity, and equality
 of human beings and the value of all life in the universe.*

We welcome persons of all racial and ethnic heritages, all sexual orientations, all gender identities, and all faith perspectives to our Christian community. We stand for each individual’s right to worship God and to respond to God’s call to ministry in her or his own understanding of God’s all-encompassing love.

We value a holistic approach to faith and seek to worship in ways that are intellectually credible, emotionally stimulating, spiritually engaging and contemporarily relevant.

We value music and art and ritual to express what we cannot ever fully say. We value participation so that we might hear many approaches to our faith.

Pursuant to Section 30.06, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with a concealed handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a concealed handgun.

Pursuant to Section 30.07, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with an openly carried handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a handgun that is carried openly.