



February 17, 2021
Ash Wednesday

PRELUDE

“What Wondrous Love is This”

arr. David N. Johnson

INTRODUCTION & WORDS OF WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Return to the Lord. Leave behind all the pain. Leave behind all the hate. Come back to your true life again.

Help us abandon our sins, and our fears. Lead us back to repentance and hope.

Return to the Lord. Discard your old ways. Give up your old sorrows.

We will cling to the hope found in Christ.

HYMN No. 450, St. 1 & 2

“Be Thou My Vision”

SLANE

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
Thou my soul’s shelter, and thou my high tower;
Raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Most holy and merciful God,

We confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned 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. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Remember that in creation the Spirit of God moved through the dust and brought life to people. The Spirit of Christ can move through the ashes of our penitence and bring us to new and forgiven life.

God is just and may be trusted to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every kind of wrong.

If you would have the life God intends for you, be you likewise forgiving.

PSALM 139

Musical Setting by Noel A. Piercy

Please join the choir in singing the Antiphon:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, O Lord, and know my inmost thoughts.*

RESPONSIVE READING OF PSALM 51:1-18

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

SUNG RESPONSE

“Sign Us with Ashes”

PHOENIX

*Sign us with ashes, merciful God,
Children of dust, as to dust we return.
Sign us with ashes, merciful God.
Mark us and make us your own.*

Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.

Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.

SUNG RESPONSE

“Sign Us with Ashes”

PHOENIX

*Sign us with ashes, merciful God,
Children of dust, as to dust we return.
Sign us with ashes, merciful God.
Mark us and make us your own.*

Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You.

Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise. For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

SUNG RESPONSE

“Sign Us with Ashes”

PHOENIX

*Sign us with ashes, merciful God,
Children of dust, as to dust we return.
Sign us with ashes, merciful God.
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REFLECTION

“A Very Reasonable Man”

Rev. William Schram

ANTHEM

“Immortal Love, Forever Full”

David Schwoebel

RESPONSIVE READING

“What Ashes Mean for Us”

The temptation is to want a rulebook of laws which lead to salvation - not Grace. The rules mean “we can do it”. Grace means “God does it”.

We are closed, O God. Open us to you.

It isn't being faithful, or even contrite, which is the most important thing. It is being "open". Open to acceptance of God's forgiveness, open to letting go of self, open to letting God just happen.

We are closed, O God. Open us to you.

An author once said that what God needs to work in the world is a person who is an empty cup turned upright. That way, God can pour in and work through us. The cup doesn't know what's being done, because it can't see itself. It has no control over what it receives. This sounds so easy, but it is so terribly hard to do.

We are closed, O God. Open us to you.

We all work hard to be "perfect before God". In the meantime, we forget that once we have accepted Jesus the work is shared. We have nothing left to do but be ourselves, humbly accept ourselves complete with flaws, and let the Holy Spirit do the work of the "perfecting".

We are closed, O God. Open us to you.

An experience of total and complete acceptance of God is rare – that feeling of “Whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s”. Every once in a while, we get a taste of that, but most of the time, we’re too stubborn to just step back and let God in.

We are closed, O God. Open us to you.

Lord Jesus Christ, you know our faults and have heard our prayers. You have ripped open the barriers that separate us from God and opened us to the grace of God through your sacrifice of love on a cross, and your resurrection from the dead. Promise of God, fill your people and give us peace.

HYMN No. 450, St. 3 & 4

“Be Thou My Vision”

SLANE

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven’s joys, O bright heaven’s Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“The Glory of These Forty Days”

arr. Robert J. Powell

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Rev. William Schram

Rev. Barbara Piercy

Richard Hauser & Donna McGinley, Readers

Noel Piercy

Micki Hardenberg, Cantor

Chancel Choir

Chancel Handbell Choir

Joelle Piercy, Soloist

Jessica Goodson, Flute

Ray Liptak & Rob Thiemann, AV Engineers



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