

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

God, you remind us in your word that when we are in Christ, we are new creatures, and the old things pass away. This Ash Wednesday, we take hold of your promise: Renew us, Lord: a new walk, a new talk, a new mind, a new heart, a new life. Thank you for the promise that we can truly be made new again. Amen.

## THE SIGN OF ASHES

Remember, [name], that you were made from the earth in the image of God.

CLOSING HYMN: "Cry of My Heart" TFWS  
2165

SENDING FORTH: Created from dust, held together by God's extravagant love, we turn away from sin, and leave today embracing God's love.

BENEDICTION: The Spirit of the Lord is upon you, because the Lord has anointed you; God is sending you to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim a season of God's favor, to comfort all who mourn to give them a garland instead of ashes, gladness instead of sorrow, a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. And you will be called oaks of righteousness, the plantings of the Lord to display God's glory. You shall build up the ancient devastation, repair the ruined cities, and heal the despair of many generations. And I shall greatly rejoice in the Lord; for God has clothed me in garments of salvation, and covered me with a robe of righteousness! As the earth brings forth its shoots, so God will cause justice and praise to spring up before all nations! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord! Thanks be to God! Amen.

POSTLUDE "Sanctuary" x2 TFWS  
2164

Traditionally, the ashes used for Ash Wednesday imposition are made by burning the dried palms from last year's Palm Sunday. If you happen to have a palm at home, you can burn it in a fireproof vessel. If not, take a piece of paper and write or draw some things you are praying for, or things you want to let go of, this Lent. You can do this individually or as a household. Then carefully burn your paper into ash. Into the ash, add just a few drops of olive oil at a time; blending just a bit, but leaving it essentially dry. You do not want a wet or clumpy mixture. When it comes to oil, less is better. Add only drops at a time. Ashes are



applied with the thumb in the form of a small cross on the forehead with the words: "Remember, [name], that you were made from the earth in the image of God."

**5th AVE. UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**323 South 5th Avenue ~ West Bend WI 53095**

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**ASH WEDNESDAY ~ February 17, 2021**

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MUSIC FOR GATHERING: "Gather Us In" TFWS 2236

## STILLNESS:

Ash Wednesday is the first day of the liturgical season of Lent, a season for listening. Many people who have heard only one thing about Lent think it is a time for sacrifices. They hear about giving things up for Lent and assume it is a cold, strict time. Some people do not drink coffee or eat chocolate. There are people who stop using social media during Lent. Lent, though, is not intended to be a season of not having any fun. The people who change their behavior do not do it because those things are bad or wrong. People who give things up do it because the things get in the way. Lent is a time for clearing away what makes it more difficult to listen to sacred stillness. It is easy for us to get into routines which make it harder for us to hear. We become accustomed to sleepwalking through our lives without paying attention. When we build up routines to convince ourselves we control our lives it becomes helpful to knock them down. Ash Wednesday and Lent are not about being disciplined or rigid. This is a season for setting aside distractions and distortions *so we can listen well*.

MUSICAL MEDITATION: "Sanctuary" x2 TFWS 2164

GATHERING IN WORSHIP: (Adapted from Tim Graves)

**For just such a time as this, we were made. In the image of God, loving, grace-giving, and wise, we are created to be the hands, hearts, and feet of divinity. We gather on this Ash Wednesday, not because we must, not to puff ourselves up, but to start out on the trail leading to the resurrection.**

PRAYER: (Adapted from Pamela C. Hawkins)

O God, who makes all things new, new stars, new dust, new life; take my heart, every hardened edge and measured beat, and create something new in me. I need your newness, God, the rough parts of me made smooth; the stagnant, stirred; the stuck, freed; the unkind, forgiven. And then, by the power of your Spirit, I need to be turned toward Love again. Amen.

#### LITANY OF CONFESSION:

God, we glorify you today. Thank you for not giving up on us. Thank you for not throwing us away or casting us aside. Thank you for not dealing with us as we so deserved. Thank you for love that covers a multitude of sins. With wide open arms, you have received us, so we come running back to you. Amen.

#### ASH WEDNESDAY HOMILY

#### READINGS AND PRAYERS:

ASHES, a sign of creation

Now we acknowledge that we are creatures, wonderfully-made. In receiving ashes, we gratefully honor our earthy origins and our likeness to all other creatures; and we welcome God's sovereignty over all that exists.

Read Genesis 2:4b-9

*O God, help us to use this season of Lent to examine our attachments, and to sense where You invite us to live more simply and deeply.*

ASHES, a sign of mortality

Now we acknowledge that we are discontented creatures; we fall into estrangement and alienation. We confess too that we are finite creatures, and we will one day die. In receiving ashes, we express our trust that in life and in death, by divine mercy, we shall always be safe in God.

Read Genesis 3:8-13, 17-19

*Shine the light of Your love into the private corners of our lives where we have acquired so much clutter that it has begun to restrict our freedom.*

ASHES, a sign of repentance

Now we acknowledge that we sin, and that we are much-sinned-against; we need forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. In receiving ashes, we ask God to change our hearts, to make us and others whole, and to help us offer reconciliation in this world.

Read Isaiah 58:1-12

*Grant us the strength to free ourselves from appetites and needs that drive us into taking, having and wanting more than we need or have time for.*

*Silence*

MUSICAL MEDITATION:

“Sanctuary” x2

TFWS 2164

ASHES, in the sign of the Cross

Now we acknowledge that Jesus freely chose a life of service that led him to lay down his life in love. In receiving ashes, we humbly follow his Way, and commit ourselves to love kindness, mercy and justice as he did, even if it means laying down our own lives.

Read Matthew 16:21-26a

*Teach us that in letting go we become free, rather than deprived, generous rather than covetous, and spacious rather than restricted. We offer You our Lenten observance, and today we place our feet on the road to Easter, and walk the Way that You have walked before us. Amen.*

THE RITUAL OF ASHES:

Blessing of the ASHES

Bless by your Holy Spirit, O God, these ashes, this dust of the earth. May all who receive them, and all who look upon them, be moved to repentance and renewal, for their own sakes and for the sake of the suffering world. May these ashes be no empty sign; but by your mercy, may all who bear them live what they signify—your steadfast

**love for our mortal flesh, your power to save, and your boundless mercy. Praise to you, Holy One! In life and death, we belong to you.**

Gather Us In ~ Marty Haugen

Here in this place new light is streaming  
Now is the darkness vanished away  
See in this space our fears and our dreamings  
Brought here to you in the light of this day  
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken  
Gather us in, the blind and the lame  
Call to us now and we shall awaken  
We shall arise at the sound of our name  
We are the young, our lives are a mystery  
We are the old who yearn for your face  
We have been sung throughout all of history  
Called to be light to the whole human race  
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty  
Gather us in, the proud and the strong  
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly  
Give us the courage to enter the song  
Here we will take the wine and the water  
Here we will take the bread of new birth  
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters  
Call us anew to be salt for the earth  
Give us to drink the wine of compassion  
Give us to eat the bread that is you  
Nourish us well and teach us to fashion  
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true  
Not in the dark of buildings confining  
Not in some heaven light years away  
But here in this place the new light is shining  
Now is the kingdom, now is the day  
Gather us in and hold us forever  
Gather us in and make us your own  
Gather us in, all peoples together  
Fire of love in our flesh and our bones  
Fire of love in our flesh and our bones

Sanctuary ~ John W. Thompson & Randy Scruggs

Lord prepare me  
To be a sanctuary  
Pure and holy  
Tried and true  
And with thanksgiving  
I'll be a living  
Sanctuary, oh for You

Cry of My Heart ~ Terry Butler

[Chorus]  
It is the cry of my heart to follow You  
It is the cry of my heart to be close to  
You  
It is the cry of my heart to follow  
All of the days of my life  
  
It is the cry of my heart to follow You  
It is the cry of my heart to be close to  
You  
It is the cry of my heart to follow  
All of the days of my life

[Verse 1]  
Teach me Your holy ways oh Lord  
So, I can walk in Your truth  
Teach me Your holy ways oh Lord  
And make me wholly devoted to You  
Oh, oh, whoa

[Chorus]  
It is the cry of my heart to follow You  
It is the cry of my heart to be close to  
You  
It is the cry of my heart to follow  
All of the days of my life

[Verse 2]  
Open my eyes so I can see  
The wonderful things that You do  
You do wonderful things, God  
Open my heart up more and more  
And make it wholly devoted to You  
Oh, oh, whoa