

# *Ash Wednesday*

## *March 2nd, 2022, 7:30pm*

*Our PCAS Vision:*

*"To be a Light by Living, Loving, Learning,  
and Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ."*

### *Order of Worship*

*(\*Please rise in body and/or spirit )*

#### **Invitation to Gather**

Community Reader:

Today we gather as family with Christ followers across the world,  
to mark the beginning of the holy season of Lent.

**Prelude**                      There is a Balm in Gilead                      arr. J. Bert Carlson

Community Reader:

God calls us in this season to reflect, and to unburden our hearts and  
lives. We ask God's healing and God's forgiveness, we aspire to grow  
closer in God's grace and love, to hear God's voice.

**People:**

**We ask of one another: What do we bring to this season?**

**We ask of one another: What do we seek, what grace do we desire?**

**We ask of one another: Where do we need the healing of Jesus Christ?**

Community Reader:

We enter into, and welcome together the presence of the Holy Spirit  
in our midst.

**People:**

**In stillness, we reach for our Lord:**

**Our Lord who is always forgiving,**

**always merciful,**

**always loving.**

## Hymn 802

## The King of Love My Shepherd Is

The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am his and he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow my ransomed soul he leadeth.  
and where the verdant pastures grow, with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, but yet in love he sought me,  
and on his shoulder gently laid, and home rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill with thee, dear Lord, beside me;  
thy rod and staff my comfort still, thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight; thy unction grace bestoweth;  
and O what transport of delight from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days thy goodness faileth never;  
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever.

### Prayer for Illumination

Community Readers:

With the beginning of Lent, we are often reminded of our own difficulties and struggles. Sometimes the way has seemed too dark. Sometimes we feel like our lives have been obscured by such grief and pain it is increasingly hard to reach out for help, it feels easier to be alone, or to remain silent, we simply cannot see how our story will end.

But in the midst of our weakness, we ask that you would be strong.  
Lord, rise up within us, let your Spirit shine out of every broken place we've clung to or walked through and remind us that we have never been alone.

Manifest your love and power so convincingly in our vulnerability and our weakness, that others will instantly recognize that it is You who is at work within us.

We ask that you would accept the "ashes" of our lives, and give us instead the unmistakable beauty of your Presence. Remove our mourning and grief and redeem it with the oil of joy and gladness from your Spirit.

Take away our disillusion and despair, and trade it for hope found in your praise.

For we declare even in our weakness, our brokenness, our mourning and disappointment, you remain worthy of praise. We choose gratitude, we rebuke darkness in favor of light and pray that our winter of darkness will fade into a springtime of light and renewal.

We know that you are with us, wherever we are,  
and that you are greater than any trial.

We are grateful that You are always making all things new. **Amen.**

### **Scripture Reading**

Romans 5:1-5

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

### **Reading**

*Ashes*

Susan Palo Cherwein

*We take palms from the  
passion procession,  
We take the palms from the  
entry into Jerusalem,  
And burn them  
char them  
mix them with the oil of anointing  
and anoint ourselves  
with Ashes  
to begin the living out of Lent.  
The ashes of mourning -  
    for we will no longer be who we were  
the ashes of humility -  
    for from dust we came  
    human from humus  
the ashes of cleansing -  
    for we will put on a new garment  
the ashes of regeneration -  
    for God will cause the phoenix to rise up  
the ashes of fertility -  
    for the grain of wheat will bear fruit.  
the ashes of the dead -  
    for in Christ's death there is life.*

## **Shared Responsive Reading**

Invitation to a Holy Lent

Community Reader:

As we journey through this season, we pray for ourselves, for this family at the Presbyterian Church at Shrewsbury, and for the whole world, that all people may seek, recognize and be reconciled to God and one another.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer**

Community Reader:

Lord, we pray that we may hear your call this Lent to grow closer to you, seeking your heart, your mercy and your loving kindness.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer**

Community Reader:

Lord, we pray that when we lose confidence in ourselves and in our work in our lives, and community, you will restore our trust and bless us with the gift of faith.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer**

Community Reader:

Lord, whenever our hearts are filled with pain, anger or resentment at the world in which we live, when we are shocked by the cruelty, hatred and injustice which surrounds us, restore our hope and allow us to find compassion and love.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer**

**Duet**

Sign Us With Ashes

William P. Rowan

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.

Surely, you alone can save us. You pay our price with precious blood.  
Reaching through your great compassion,  
you lift up your people with love.

Surely, you alone uphold us. You give us strength for all our needs.  
Shielding with a father's favor, you bless us with pardon and peace.

Surely, you alone can heal us. Yours is the will to make us whole.  
Soothing with a mother's kindness, the contrite of heart, you console.

Surely, you alone can free us. You break the bonds of guilt and sin.  
Bracing, till we walk uprightly, you bolster our hope once again.

Surely, you alone can refine us. You give us grace for lives made new, forging, through your fire and radiance, a sacrifice worthy for you.

Surely, you alone can redeem us. You fill our dust with holy breath. Bursting, from the grave in glory, you rise from the ashes of death!

### **Imposition of Ashes**

Community Reader:

Lord, as we gather together, in person and remotely from our homes, we now place this mark on our foreheads to witness to our confession to live before you and follow you as your disciple.

**People: With God's help.**

[When all have administered their ashes]

**People: Bless us, Lord, and make us a sign to the world of our desire to grow, to change, and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.**

### **Scripture Reading**

Luke 4:14-20

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

### **Reading**

*From Sinfonia Oecumenica*

*(Worship With the Churches in the World)*

(published for The World Council of Churches)

Sometimes, as we look at our lives, we are disappointed or even ashamed.

We know that we haven't been the people we could or should have been, or the people we would like to think we are.

Often we feel trapped by the past, limited by the present.

The past holds us back; we have got stuck in a rut.  
Is it possible, Lord, for us to change?

I wish there were a place of New Beginnings, where all our mistakes, all our self-pity, all that would break our hearts, could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door, and never put on again.

Who has not wished for a fresh start, a new beginning?  
Who has not wished to be able to leave behind all we have made a mess of, all that drags us down, all the blunders, mistakes and wrongs in our relationships, especially the things that divide us and bring us into conflict with one another?

Listen to what the Apostle Paul writes:  
When anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new person altogether.  
The past is finished and gone; everything has become fresh and new.

Christian faith is full of hope.  
It is a new beginning, opening a future which is different from the past.  
Each day we can be born anew.

Each day our lives are given back to us with hope.

## **Communion**

### **Invitation to the Lord's Table**

### **Great Thanksgiving**

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 truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise,  
eternal God, creator and ruler of the universe.

You are our God, and we are the creatures of your hand.

You made us from the dust of the earth, breathed into us the breath of  
life, and set us in your world to love and serve you.

When we rejected your love and ignored your wisdom,  
you did not reject us.

You loved us still and called us to turn again to you  
in obedience and in love.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with the heavenly choirs  
and with all the faithful of every time and place,  
who forever sing to the glory of your name:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the one who comes in your name.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

You are holy, O God of majesty,  
and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.  
Out of your great love for the world, you sent Jesus among us  
to set us free from the tyranny of evil.  
He lived as one of us, sharing our joys and sorrows.  
By his dying and rising, he releases us from bondage to sin  
and frees us from the dominion of death.

We give you thanks that on the night of his arrest  
Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you,  
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take eat. This is my body, given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, saying:  
this cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,  
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

Remembering all your mighty and merciful acts,  
we take this bread and this wine from the gifts you have given us,  
and celebrate with joy the redemption won for us in Jesus Christ.  
Accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving  
as a living and holy offering of ourselves,  
that our lives may proclaim the One crucified and risen.

**Great is the mystery of faith:  
Christ has died,  
Christ is risen,  
Christ will come again.**

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us  
and upon these your gifts of bread and wine,  
that the bread we break and the cup we bless  
may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ.  
By your Spirit unite us with the living Christ  
and with all who are baptized in his name,  
that we may be one in ministry in every place.  
As this bread is Christ's body for us,  
send us out to be the body of Christ in the world.

Lead us, O God, by the power of your Spirit  
to live as the Lord requires: to do justice, to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with you, our God.  
Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ until this mortal life is ended,  
and all that is earthly returns to dust.  
Give us strength to serve you faithfully until the promised day  
of resurrection, when, with the redeemed of all the ages,  
we will feast with you at your table in glory.

Through Christ, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God,  
with the Holy Spirit in the holy church,  
now and forever. **Amen.**

**People:**

**We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes.  
This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life.  
As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:  
Our Father.....**

**Breaking of the Bread**

The gifts of God for the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Community Reader:

Beloved people of God:  
every year in this season together,  
we celebrate our redemption  
through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ..  
Lent is a time to prepare for our great celebration  
and to renew our life in the paschal mystery.  
We begin this holy season  
by acknowledging our need for repentance,  
and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed  
in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**People:**

**We acknowledge our need for repentance,  
and for the mercy and forgiveness  
proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.  
We pray, therefore, and together in the name of Christ,  
to observe a holy Lent  
by self-examination and penitence,  
by prayer and fasting,  
by works of love,  
and by meditating on God's word.**

## Hymn 177

## I Will Come to You

I will come to you in the silence;  
I will lift you from all your fear.  
You will hear my voice; I claim you as my choice.  
Be still and know that I am here.

I am hope for all who are hopeless;  
I am eyes for all who long to see.  
In the shadows of the night, I will be your light.  
Come and rest in me.

### **Refrain:**

Do not be afraid, I am with you.  
I have called you each by name.  
Come and follow me, I will bring you home;  
I love you and you are mine.

I am strength for all the despairing,  
healing for the ones who dwell in shame.  
All the blind will see; the lame will all run free,  
and all will know my name. **Refrain**

I am the Word that leads all to freedom;  
I am the peace the world cannot give.  
I will call your name, embracing all your pain.  
Stand up, now walk and live! **Refrain**

## **Blessing and Charge**

May the Holy Spirit make you holy in every way  
and keep your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—  
free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
And all the people said.....**Amen.**

## **Postlude**

Here I Am, Lord

arr. John Carter

## **Worship Leaders**

Pastor: Rev. Katja Gruening

Pianist: Marcello Velame

Hymn Leadership: Sean Starke

Duet: Tricia Apy and Sean Starke

Deacons: Sue Starke and Diane Suarez

Readers: David Apy, Kathy Barnes, George Kustka, Bob Levy, Sean Starke, Sue Starke, Jane Wagner, Maureen Wolf, Linda Zucaro

Ashes: Chris Kustka and Carol Streeper