



Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021

Religion and ritual often give outward, shared expression to profound inner realities. On this day, dust and ashes express our own and our community's confusion, division, fear, lack of understanding, grief, anger, despair. Together in heart and spirit if not in body, we return to God, powerless over this unmanageable life and world, seeking the power and hope of our Creator, Savior, and Living Spirit to save and sustain us all.

TO PREPARE AT HOME:

This service can be as interactive as you want to make it. Gather a candle or two, a cross of some sort, a small bowl or cup of water, dust or ash mixed with oil (a dab of cocoa powder or mascara works, too), and perhaps paper or your journal, even art supplies(!) for prayers. We will also share communion, so have bread and wine ready if you wish.

GATHERING

Prelude

*Breathe deep as we light worship candles
in the church and at home, attending God who is always glad for our arrival.*

Welcome & Blessing

*“Beloved Is Where We Begin”
Jan Richardson, *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons**

*Trace the baptismal cross: “You are my beloved, with you I am well-pleased.”
Silence & Breath Prayer: “Beloved”*

Song of Welcome

“Restore in Us, O God”

ELW #328

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| <p>1 Restore in us, O God,
the splendor of your love;
renew your image in our hearts,
and all our sins remove.</p> <p>2 O Spirit, wake in us
the wonder of your pow'r;
from fruitless fear unfurl our lives
like springtime bud and flow'r.</p> | <p>3 Bring us, O Christ, to share
the fullness of your joy;
baptize us in the risen life
that death cannot destroy.</p> <p>4 Three-personed God, fulfill
the promise of your grace,
that we, when all our searching ends,
may see you face to face.</p> |
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WORD

After each reading the lector will light and place a candle in sand.

Reading

The prophet Joel, chapter 2, selected verses

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,

for the day of [YHWH] is coming, it is near—

a 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.

Yet even now, says [YHWH], return to me with all your heart,

with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to [YHWH], your God, for [God] is gracious and merciful,

slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged;

Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

Between the [altar and the door] let the priests, the ministers of [YHWH], weep.

Let them say, “Spare your people, O [YHWH],

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?’ ”

Response

“Return to God”

Marty Haugen

Return to God with all your heart, the Source of grace and mercy

Come, seek the tender faithfulness of God (*repeat*)

Reading

Joel 2, selected

Then the LORD became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people.

In response to this people the LORD said:

Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things!

Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green;

The tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the LORD your God...

I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten,

The hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army which I sent against you...

You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God,

Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Message

“With Mud on Our Faces”

Rev. Brenda Satrum

*Even now, says YHWH, return to me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Joel 2:12-13*

Response

“Love Round”

Anonymous

Love, love, love, love. Christians, this is our call:
Love our neighbors as ourselves, for God loves us all.

Reading

L: A reading from Psalm 51.

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

C: Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

Confession

L: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. *(Silence is kept.)*
Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,

C: have mercy on us.

For self-centered, self-protected living; for every lack of humility, gentleness
openness, and courage:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For hurtful words that condemn and angry deeds that harm;
For refusing to say hard things and for refusing to listen when it's hard:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For unwillingness to see the image of God in ourselves, our neighbors, our enemies:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For longing to have what is not ours, fear of sharing what others need,
and for judging those who have less as “less than”:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For jealousies and resentments that divide families and nations,
for rivalries that create strife and warfare among races and peoples:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For carelessness toward creation, its resources, its fruits:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For apathy and distraction in our walk with You,
for resisting Your gracious love for ourselves and withholding it from others:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

Return to God with all your heart, the Source of grace and mercy
Come, seek the tender faithfulness of God (*repeat*)

Prayer

L: Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who return to you. Create in us new and brave hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may deeply receive your merciful pardon and walk with new freedom the Way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Invitation to the Cross

L: Jesus, in his suffering and death, reveals the very heart of God,
A heart of pure unspeakable love,
A heart that risks everything for the sake of love,
A heart open to the suffering of others
And broken by the cruelty of others,
A heart alive with love that death could not hold.

L: Come to the cross, to the heart of God.
Bring your own heart as it is—hardened or cold, open and warm;
Broken or empty, healing or full;
Fearful or unfaithful, courageous or trusting;
For God welcomes it—God welcomes YOU—
and breathes into you and your dear heart the Spirit of Christ’s love.

PRAYER AT THE CROSS, MEAL, & ASHES

*We will sing as worshipers pray and receive an ashen cross,
symbolic of our mortality and failings and Christ’s claim upon us in their midst.*

*At home, please feel free to trace a cross on your own forehead—
with water, oil, ashes (cocoa powder?), or just your plain, sweet touch.*

*Write your own prayers for self and others at this time—
please include them in the chat line or comments on Facebook!*

Receive the nourishment of Christ’s gracious meal.

Stations:

Communion

Ashes

Prayer & Candles

Offering, at the door

Words of Institution

The Lord's Prayer

Distribution, Ashes, Prayer & Song

“Back to the Cross”

SENDING

Prayer and Blessing

L: Compassionate God,

In Christ's gentle and suffering love you have shown us the way of abundant life. Keep us joined to Christ's life-giving passion, that our hearts may know the joy and freedom for which you have created us, now and forever.

C: Amen.

L: As tender as parent to child, so gentle is God to us.

From Psalm 103

As high as heaven is above earth, so vast is God's love for us.

As far as east is from west, so far God removes our sin,

Renewing our lives in Christ.

L: Go in peace. Or remain to pray.

Song of Sending

“Amazing Grace”

ELW #779

1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.

4 The Lord has promised good to me;
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!

5 When we've been there ten thousand
years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.

3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

The room stays quiet until all have finished praying. Music may continue awhile after the dismissal or may end, leaving people to pray in silence.

“Restore in Us, O God”

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

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“Return to God”

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“Amazing Grace”

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt., sts. 1-4; anonymous, st. 5

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