

ASH WEDNESDAY

A WELCOME

SHARED LITURGY

Leader: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

ALL: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all God's benefits.

Leader: Bless the Lord, who forgives all our sins and heals all our infirmities.

ALL: Bless the Lord, who redeems our lives from the grave, and crowns us with mercy.

PRAYER TIME

MUSICAL WORSHIP

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

"What stands out to me in this passage?" and

"Holy Spirit, what does this passage mean for me/us on this 1st day of lent?"

READING 1: Isaiah 58:1-12

1 "Shout it aloud, do not hold back.

Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion

and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

2 For day after day they seek me out;

they seem eager to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that does what is right

and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions

and seem eager for God to come near them.

3 'Why have we fasted,' they say,

'and you have not seen it?

Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?

“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.

4 Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.

5 Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?

Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?

Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

6 “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,

to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?

7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

9 Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

10 and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.

11 The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land

and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.

12 Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

REFLECTION PRAYER

“What stands out to me in this passage?” and

“Holy Spirit, what does this passage mean for me/us on this 1st day of lent?”

SHARING TIME

MUSICAL WORSHIP

READING 2: Luke 18:9-14

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector.12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

13 “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

14 “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

REFLECTION PRAYER

“What stands out to me in this passage?” and

“Holy Spirit, what does this passage mean for me/us on this 1st day of lent?”

SHARING TIME

SHARED LITURGY

Leader: Shortly after Adam and Eve committed the first sin, we hear God utter some of the most haunting words in all of scripture, “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return”

ALL: Tonight, we remember that we are dust, and to dust we shall return.

Leader: Virus and violence, disaster and decay; we all fall down.

Nothing can stop death from coming—

Not our diversions or denial,

our insights or investments,

our castles or our causes.

All that we are and all that we love

was forged from the elements of earth.

And as it once was, so shall it be again.

ALL: Tonight, we remember that we are dust, and to dust we shall return.

Leader: Frightened by the weight of eternity,

We scramble to write an identity.

Getting caught up in our own centrality,

We mistake importance for immortality.

Tonight, we remember that it’s not about us.

And yet tonight we also remember that it IS about us.

All the worst in our world

are made of the very same stuff that flows through our veins and enlightens our brains.

ALL: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Leader: We are all complicit and victimized,

All oppressor and oppressed.

Broken hearts create broken systems.

Broken systems create broken hearts.

And wholeness eludes us all.

The wind passes over us, and we are gone,

and its place knows us no more.

ALL: Tonight we remember that we are dust, and to dust we shall return.

Leader: Yes, we will die. And the world might forget us.

But the steadfast love of the Lord never will.

But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him,
and his righteousness to children's children.

The Spirit exhales, and dry bones catch their breath;

Ash re-ignites, alight and alive -

Smudged on the black fingertips of the God who bends to sweep wide the arm of salvation through the dust of the earth.

"As a father has compassion on his children,

So the Lord has compassion on us;

For he knows how we are formed,

He remembers that we are dust."

ALL: Remember, O God, the dust from which we arose.

That by your breath, we will arise again.

Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy.

CONFESSION & REPENTANCE

Where do you feel the Holy Spirit moving you to confess?

What do you need to repent of?

Pray to confess, repent, and receive the forgiveness offered through Jesus.

After you've taken some time in prayer, please come forward for the imposition of the ashes.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Leader: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return. Repent and believe the good news."

MUSICAL WORSHIP

BLESSING

Leader: Receive this blessing as we depart:

May God the Father, who does not despise the broken spirit,
Give to you a contrite heart.

May Christ, who bore our sins in his body on the tree,
Heal you by his wounds.

May the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth,
Speak to you words of pardon and peace.

May the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you
always. Amen.

Go in peace, you are loved.

**Tonight's gathering was created with material from Pastor Aashish Baskaran and Mill City Church in Minneapolis, MN as
well as their blessing to do so.*

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