

Ash Wednesday
February 17, 2021
Presbyterian Center



Gathering

Prelude

William McConnell, organ

These words appear on-screen during the prelude:

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession. Acknowledging that we have all sinned and fallen short of God’s glory, we repent and return to our loving creator. Acutely aware of our failure and frailty, we express our utter reliance on God’s saving grace.

Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance, sorrow, and sacrifice. Traditionally, the ashes for this service are made from the palm branches of the previous year.

— *Book of Common Worship* (WJKP, 2018), 247

If palm ashes are not available, worshipers are invited to use “local dust”—soil from the yard, a potted plant, or a nearby green-space. Or participants may trace the shape of the cross, a sign of baptism, on the forehead or hand with water or oil.

Opening Sentences

So Jung Kim, Miguel Andres Rosa

The leaders say (in Korean, then English, stanza by stanza):

God sent Christ into the world
not to condemn the world,
but that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:17; Ps. 46:1–3

God is our refuge and strength,
a present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though the waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
God’s love endures forever.

Prayer of the Day

Miguel Andres Rosa

The following may be said:

Almighty God,
you despise nothing you have made
and you forgive the sins of all who trust in you.
Create in us new and contrite hearts,

that truly repenting of our sins,
and acknowledging our brokenness,
we may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
full pardon and forgiveness;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn

Sign Us with Ashes

GTG 433, vv. 1–3
Gillian Hollis, William McConnell

Refrain:

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.

1 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. (Refrain)

2 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. (Refrain)

3 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. (Refrain)

Word

Prayer for Illumination

Marissa Galván-Valle

The following or another prayer for illumination may be said:

Merciful God,
your word is our way of truth and life.
Create in us hearts that are clean
and put your Holy Spirit within us,
so that we may receive your grace
and declare your praise forever;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture

First Reading

Isaiah 58:1–12

Marissa Galván-Valle

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. “Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Hymn

Cuando el pobre / When the Poor Ones

GTG 762, vv. 1–2 (S/E)

Marissa Galván-Valle, Flor Vélez-Díaz, Alonzo Johnson, David Gambrell, William McConnell

1 Cuando el pobre nada tiene y aún reparte,
cuando un hombre pasa sed y agua nos da,
cuando el débil a su hermano fortalece,

Estribillo:

va Dios mismo en nuestro mismo caminar.

Va Dios mismo en nuestro mismo caminar.

1 When the poor ones who have nothing share with strangers,
when the thirsty water give unto us all,

when the crippled in their weakness strengthen others,

Refrain:

then we know that God still goes that road with us,
then we know that God still goes that road with us.

2 Cuando un hombre sufre y logra su consuelo,
cuando espera y no se cansa de esperar,
cuando amamos, aunque el odio nos rodée, (Estribillo)

2 When at last all those who suffer find their comfort,
when they hope though even hope seems hopelessness,
when we love though hate at times seems all around us, (Refrain)

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10

Alonzo Johnson

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Hymn

Cuando el pobre / When the Poor Ones

GTG 762, vv. 3–4 (S/E)

Marissa Galván-Valle, Flor Vélez-Díaz, Alonzo Johnson, David Gambrell, William McConnell

3 Cuando crece la alegría y nos inunda,
cuando dicen nuestros labios la verdad,
cuando amamos el sentir de los sencillos, (Estribillo)

Estribillo:

va Dios mismo en nuestro mismo caminar.
Va Dios mismo en nuestro mismo caminar.

4 Cuando abunda el bien y llena los hogares,
cuando un hombre donde hay guerra pone paz,
cuando “hermano” le llamamos al extraño, (Estribillo)

3 When our joy fills up our cup to overflowing,
when our lips can speak no words other than true,
when we know that love for simple things is better, (Refrain)

Refrain:
then we know that God still goes that road with us,
then we know that God still goes that road with us.

4 When our homes are filled with goodness in abundance,
when we learn how to make peace instead of war,
when each stranger that we meet is called a neighbor, (Refrain)

Invitation to Observe a Holy Lent

Laurie Kraus

The leader says:

Beloved people of God:
every year at the time of the Christian Passover
we celebrate our redemption
through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Lent is a time to prepare for this 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.

Holding or lifting the ashes, the following is said:

We embody our repentance with the sign of ashes.
This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty
of human life,
and marks the penitence of this community.

If ashes are not available,
you may use soil, dust, oil, or water
to mark the shape of the cross—
a symbol of baptism—
on your forehead or hand.

The presider says:

This year, your Lenten disciplines might include

messages of care for people who are homebound or hospitalized,
notes of gratitude and support for health care workers or teachers,
gifts of generosity for organizations affected by the pandemic,
works of compassion for those who have lost their livelihood,
acts of protest against injustice and inequality in our society,
or new spiritual practices to nurture and heal your weary soul.

The presider continues:

I invite you, therefore, 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.
Now let us bow before God, our creator and redeemer,
and confess our sin. ^{BAS}

A time of silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

Psalm 51

Flor Vélez-Díaz, Edwin Gonzalez-Castillo

Psalm 51 is prayed in Spanish and English:

Por tu amor, oh Dios,
ten compasión de nosotros;
por tu gran ternura
borra nuestras culpas.

En tu inmenso amor y misericordia,
perdónanos, oh Dios.

Reconocemos que hemos sido rebeldes;
nuestros pecados no se borran de nuestra mente.

En tu inmenso amor y misericordia,
perdónanos, oh Dios.

Contra ti hemos pecado, y sólo contra ti.
haciendo lo malo, lo que tú condenas.

En tu inmenso amor y misericordia,
perdónanos, oh Dios.

Oh Dios, ¡pon en nosotros un corazón limpio!
¡Danos un espíritu nuevo y fiel!
Por Jesucristo, nuestro Señor. Amén.

Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out our transgressions.

In your abundant love and mercy,
forgive us, O God.

For we know our transgressions,
and our sin is ever before us.

In your abundant love and mercy,
forgive us, O God.

Against you, you alone, have we sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight.

In your abundant love and mercy,
forgive us, O God.

Create in us a clean heart, O God!
Place a new and right spirit within us!
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

2 Cast me not away from your presence;
cast me not away from your presence;
cast me not away from your presence
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

3 Restore to me the joy of your salvation;
restore to me the joy of your salvation;
restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit.

Litany of Penitence

The following litany of penitence is said, with a Kyrie as indicated.

At the baptismal font:

So Jung Kim

Holy and merciful God,
we confess to you and to one another,
and to the whole communion of saints
in heaven and on earth,
that we have sinned by our own fault
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.

We have not listened 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.

A Kyrie (GtG 577) is sung.

At the pulpit:

David Gambrell

We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness.
For the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives;
for our self-indulgent appetites and ways
and our exploitation of other people;
for our anger at our own frustration
and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves;
for our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts,
and our dishonesty in daily life and work;
for our negligence in prayer and worship,
and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,
have mercy on us, O God.

A Kyrie (GtG 577) is sung.

At the communion table:

Miguel Andres-Rosa

We renounce the evils of systemic poverty and exploitation,
and devote ourselves to doing justice, loving kindness,
and walking humbly before you, O God.

We renounce the sins of structural racism and white supremacy,
and devote ourselves to breaking down the walls of hostility
that separate us from one another.

We renounce the ways of fear, isolation, and scarcity in the church,
and devote ourselves to the church's teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Have mercy on us, O God.

A Kyrie (GtG 577) is sung.

At the standing cross:

Gillian Hollis

Accept our repentance, O God,
for the wrongs we have done.

For our neglect of human need and suffering
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty;

for all false judgments,
for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors,
and for our prejudice and contempt
toward those who differ from us;

for our waste and pollution of your creation
and our lack of concern for those who come after us;

have mercy on us, O God.

A Kyrie (GtG 577) is sung.

Restore us, O God of our salvation,
and show us your steadfast love.
Turn to us in your mercy and redeem us.

Ps. 85:4, 7; Ps. 69:16, 18

Imposition of Ashes

Laurie Kraus

Holding or lifting the ashes, the following prayer is said:

Almighty God,
you have created us out of the dust of the earth.
May these ashes be for us
a sign of our mortality and penitence,
for it is only by your gracious gift
are we given everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Worshippers are invited to receive the imposition of ashes, using the following words:

Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return. Amen.

Gen. 3:19

*Leaders on-camera model the imposition of ashes,
then time is provided for participants to do so at home.*

Just As I Am

William Batchelder Bradbury
Arranged by William McConnell
So Jung Kim, flute; William McConnell, piano

The confession concludes with the following words:

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
that we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of our Savior,
bring us with all your saints
to the joy of Christ's resurrection.

Sending

Hymn

Sign Us with Ashes

GTG 433, vv. 4–6
Gillian Hollis, William McConnell

Refrain:

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.

4 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. (Refrain)

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

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

Blessing and Charge

Laurie Kraus

The leader gives God's blessing, saying:

May the God of peace
make you holy in every way
and keep your whole being—
spirit, soul, and body—
free from every sin
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thess. 5:23

Another leader continues:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

An organ postlude follows.

A slide invites worshipers to contribute to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

Acknowledgements

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