

# Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



March 2nd, 2022

*Ash Wednesday*

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*Prelude*

Welcome

Opening Hymn

Be Still and Know  
*ACS 1083, sung 5 times*

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who journeys with us these forty days,  
and sustains us with the gift of grace.

**Amen.**

Let us acknowledge before God and one another  
our need for repentance and God's mercy.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,

**we confess to you our faults and failings.**

**Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word;**

**we take for ourselves instead of giving to others;**

**we spoil rather than steward your creation;**

**we cause hurt though you call us to heal;**

**we choose fear over compassion.**

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,**

**as we seek to follow in your way of life.**

**Amen.**

Hear the good news:  
God so loved the world that God gave the only Son,  
so that all may receive life.  
This promise is for you!  
God embraces you with divine mercy,  
✠ forgives you in Christ's name,  
and revives you in the Spirit's power. **Amen.**

#### Greeting & Prayer of the Day

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

#### Centering Hymn

Be Still and Know  
*ACS 1083, sung 3 times*

First Reading: Isaiah 58:1-12

“Shout for all you are worth,  
raise your voice like a trumpet!  
Proclaim to the people their faults,  
tell the house of Leah and Rachel and Jacob their sins!  
They seek me daily,  
they long to know my ways,  
like a nation that wants to act with integrity  
and not ignore the Law of its God.  
They ask me for laws that are just,  
they long for God to draw near.  
Yet they say, ‘Why should we fast  
if you never see it?  
Why do penance  
if you never notice?’  
Because when you fast, it’s business as usual,  
and you oppress all your workers!  
Because when you fast, you quarrel and fight  
and strike the poor with your fist!  
Fasting like yours today  
will never make your voices heard on high!  
Is that the sort of fast that pleases me –  
a day when people humiliate themselves,  
hanging their heads like a reed,  
lying down on sackcloth and ashes?  
Is that what you call fasting,  
a day acceptable to YHWH?  
On the contrary!  
This is the sort of fast that pleases me:  
Remove the chains of injustice!  
Undo the ropes of the yoke!  
Let those who are oppressed go free,  
and break every yoke you encounter!  
Share your bread with those who are hungry,  
and shelter homeless poor people!  
Clothe those who are naked,  
and don’t hide from the needs of your own flesh and blood!  
Do this, and your light will shine forth like the dawn –  
and your healing will break forth like lightning!  
Your integrity will go before you,  
and the glory of YHWH will be your rearguard.

Cry, and YHWH will answer;  
call, and God will say, 'I am here' –  
provided you remove from your midst  
all oppression, finger pointing, and malicious talk!  
If you give yourself to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your shadows will become like noon.  
YHWH will always guide you,  
giving relief in desert places.  
God will give strength to your bones  
and you will be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water whose wells never run dry.  
You will rebuild the ancient ruins,  
and build upon age-old foundations.  
You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
and Restorer of Ruined Neighborhoods.

Word of God, Word of Life  
**Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 51:1-17

O God, have mercy on me!  
Because of your love and your great compassion,  
wipe away my faults;  
**wash me clean of my guilt;**  
**purify me of my sin.**  
For I am aware of my faults,  
and have my sin constantly in mind.  
**I sinned against you alone,**  
**and did what is evil in your sight.**  
**You are just when you pass sentence on me,**  
**blameless when you give judgment.**

I was born in sin, conceived in sin –  
**yet you want truth to live in my innermost being.**  
**Teach me your wisdom!**  
Purify me with hyssop until I am clean;  
wash me until I am purer than new-fallen snow.  
**Instill some joy and gladness into me;**  
**let the bones you have crushed rejoice again.**  
Turn your face from my sins,  
and wipe out all my guilt.

**O God, create a clean heart in me,  
put into me a new and steadfast spirit;**  
do not banish me from your presence,  
do not deprive me of your holy Spirit!  
**Be my savior again, renew my joy,  
keep my spirit willing;**  
and I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.

**Save me from bloodshed, O God, God of my salvation –  
and my tongue will acclaim your justice.**  
Open my lips, YHWH,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.  
**Sacrifice gives you no pleasure,  
were I to present a burnt offering,  
you would not have it.**  
My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;  
you will not scorn this crushed and broken heart.

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-8, 14-21

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 6th chapter.

“Beware of practicing your piety before others to attract their attention; if you do this, you will have no reward from your Abba God in heaven.

“When you do acts of charity, for example, don’t have it trumpeted before you; that is what hypocrites do in the synagogues and streets, that they may be praised by others. The truth is, they’ve already received their reward in full. But when you do acts of charity, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing; your good deeds must be done in secret, and your Abba God - who sees all that is done in secret - will repay you.

“And when you pray, don’t behave like the hypocrites; they love to pray standing up in the synagogues and on street corners for people to see them. The truth is, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go to your room, shut the door, and pray to God who is in that secret place, and your Abba God - who sees all that is done in secret - will reward you.

“And when you pray, don’t babble like the Gentiles. They think God will hear them if they use a lot of words. Don’t imitate them. Your God knows what you need before you ask it.

“If you forgive the faults of others, Abba God will forgive you yours. If you don’t forgive others, neither will Abba God forgive you.

“And when you fast, don’t look depressed like the hypocrites. They deliberately neglect their appearance to let everyone know they are fasting. The truth is, they have already received their reward. But when you fast, brush your hair and wash your face. Don’t let anyone know you’re fasting except your Abba God, who sees all that is done in secret. And Abba God - who sees everything that is done in secret - will reward you.

“Don’t store up earthly treasures for yourselves, which moths and rust destroy and thieves can break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can destroy them and thieves cannot break in and steal them. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be as well.”

Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am  
*ELW 814, sung 5 times*

## Remembering our Roots

When the garden was lush,  
still brimming with life and beauty,  
rich in nutrients and possibility,  
God gathered the soil of the earth,  
and breathed us into life.

**From dust we were created,  
and to dust we will return.**

Not a man – an Adamah.  
Earth creature.  
A being of the soil.  
First a lonely one.  
Then love called for two,  
differentiated and distinct,  
but also flesh of my flesh,  
bone of my bone.  
Both, soil of the earth,  
Kin to all that lives.  
Created very good, indeed.

**From dust we were created,  
and to dust we will return.**

This refrain calls us back to our gritty and humble beginnings.  
It jolts us awake by reminding us of death.  
The inevitable returning home.

When the time comes,  
the garden, the body of the earth that birthed us,  
will welcome us back like the forgiveness of God,  
embracing us in ways that will transform even the most cruel among us  
into sources of nourishment for lives to come.

**From dust we were created,  
and to dust we will return.**

It doesn't make sense, this grace.  
For generations, some have worked feverishly to sever us from our family tree,  
hacking over and over at the roots of finitude and flesh,  
destroying everything and everyone who tells the story  
of who we really are –  
vulnerable and precarious creatures,  
hungry for relationship,  
starved in isolation,  
not set above our earthly kin,  
but set within a delicate web of interconnection.  
So much had been destroyed, betraying this origin story.

**From dust we were created,  
and to dust we will return.**

But we don't have to wait.

We cannot evade death,  
but we can choose life  
in these fleeting precious days.  
We can mend,  
we can protect,  
we can repent,  
we can return.

If we just pay attention,  
to our bodies,  
each other,  
the birds and the air,  
we can recognize the holy groans  
of the earth, calling us home.

**From dust we were created,  
and to dust we will return.  
Amen.**

*– Imposition of Ashes –*

## The Apostles Creed

*Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together:*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

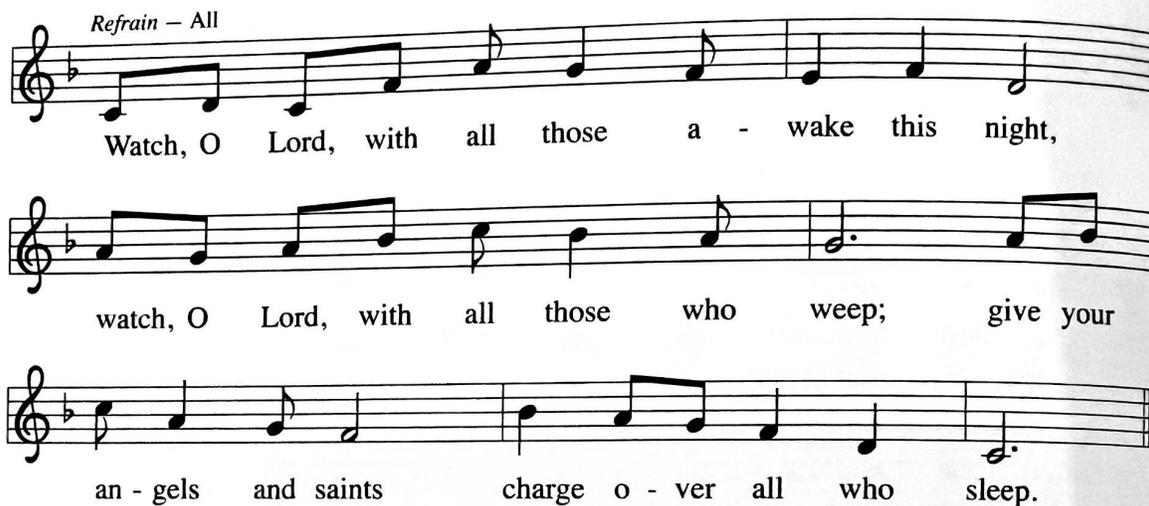
Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

EVENING

996

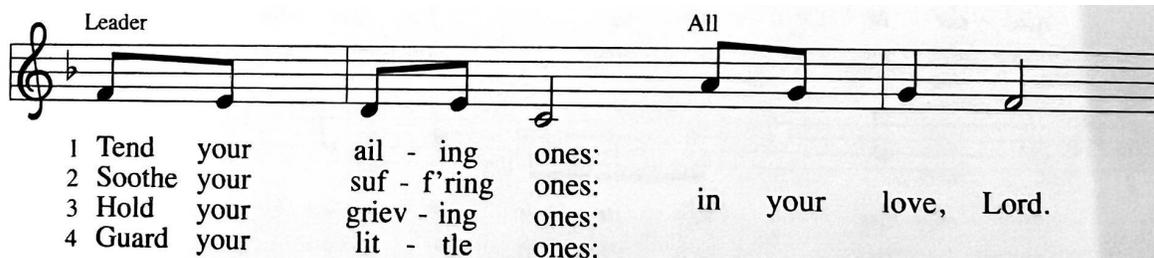
# Watch, O Lord

*Refrain - All*



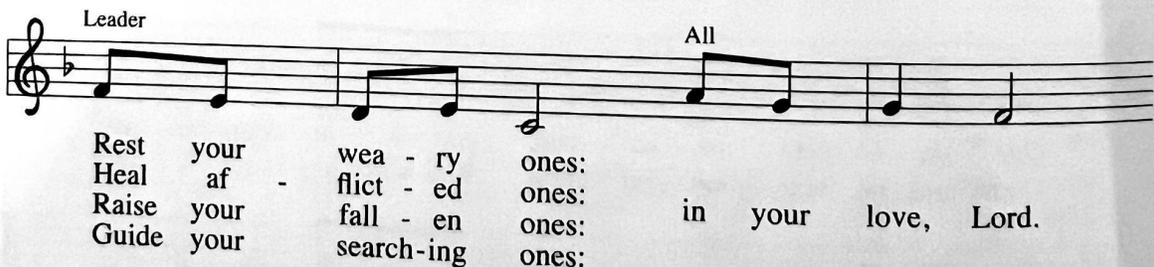
Watch, O Lord, with all those a - wake this night,  
watch, O Lord, with all those who weep; give your  
an - gels and saints charge o - ver all who sleep.

Leader All



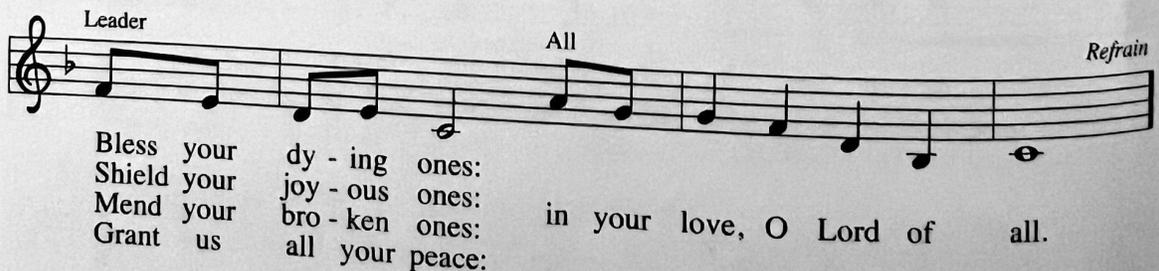
1 Tend your ail - ing ones:  
2 Soothe your suf - f'ring ones: in your love, Lord.  
3 Hold your griev - ing ones:  
4 Guard your lit - tle ones:

Leader All



Rest your wea - ry ones:  
Heal af - flict - ed ones: in your love, Lord.  
Raise your fall - en ones:  
Guide your search - ing ones:

Leader All *Refrain*



Bless your dy - ing ones:  
Shield your joy - ous ones:  
Mend your bro - ken ones: in your love, O Lord of all.  
Grant us all your peace:

Knowing that you hear every thought in our heart before the words leave our lips, we lift these prayers to you, loving God. As we are gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

Sending Song

Sunday's Palms are Wednesday's Ashes  
*TFWS 2138, verses 1+3*

Blessing the Dust

All those days  
you felt like dust,  
like dirt,  
as if all you had to do  
was turn your face  
toward the wind  
and be scattered  
to the four corners

or swept away  
by the smallest breath  
as insubstantial –

did you not know  
what the Holy One can do with dust?

This is the day  
we freely say  
we are scorched.

This is the hour  
we are marked  
by what has made it through the burning.

This is the moment  
we ask for the blessing  
that lives within  
the ancient ashes,  
that makes its home  
inside the soil of  
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked  
not for sorrow.  
And let us be marked  
not for shame.  
Let us be marked  
not for false humility  
or for thinking  
we are less  
than we are

but for claiming  
what God can do  
within the dust,  
within the dirt,  
within the stuff  
of which the world  
is made  
and the stars that blaze  
in our bones  
and the galaxies that spiral  
inside the smudge  
we bear.

Dismissal

Claimed by God  
Marked for Christ,  
Sent with the Spirit, †  
Go in peace. Serve in Love.  
**Thanks be to God.**



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**Church Office Hours**

**Closed on Fridays**

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M-Th 9-1, or by appointment

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**Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant**

Tuesday 10-1

## Attributions

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Ash Wednesday Litany - Rev. M Jade Kaiser, enfleshed, adapted by Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

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