

# Ash Wednesday



7:00 PM

March 1, 2017

## THE GATHERING

**PRELUDE** Von Gott will ich nicht lassen, BuxWV 220 Dieterich Buxtehude  
*From God I Shall Not Turn*

**CALL TO WORSHIP** John 3:17, Psalm 46:1-3 Meghan Oros

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

**People: God's love endures forever.**

Leader: 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.

**People: God's love endures forever.**

**\*HYMN NO. 81** (blue hymnal) Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days *St. Flavian*

## THE WORD

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** (*unison*) Lucy Gordon

**God, by your Holy Spirit open our minds, that as the scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may be led into your truth. Amen.**

**FIRST READING** Isaiah 58:1-12 Finn Burgin

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**THE GOSPEL READING** Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 Maggie Gordon

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## PRAYER OF RELEASING

Rev. Dr. Buran Phillips

Holy, holy, holy God

We place ourselves in your presence; we rest in the promise of your grace.

Our minds and our spirits are cluttered with many thoughts and feelings that threaten to pull our attention away from you. Let us unclench our fists and release these things:

We release all that we have done today – whether for good or for ill.

We release all that we feel like we should have done today, but did not do.

We release all that we need to do tomorrow.

We release our fear. We release our anxiety. We release our impatience. We release our pride.

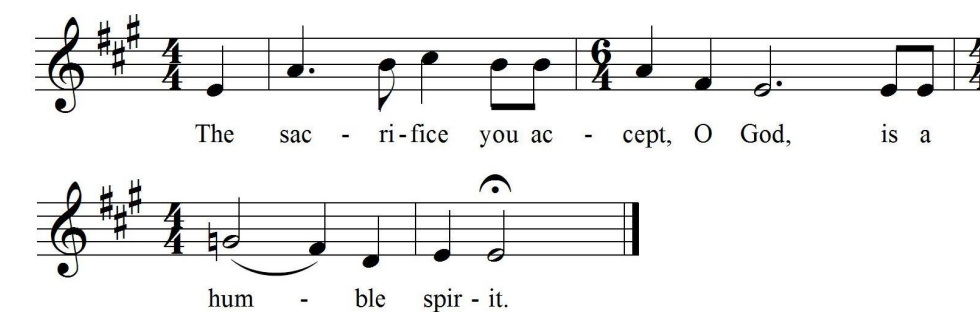
All of the thoughts, all of the feelings that pull us away from you, O God, we release.

Fill us now with the joy and the peace of your deep, abiding presence.

We offer all of ourselves to you, our One God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.  
Amen

## INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE

### CALL TO CONFESSION



Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the wondrous works

Tolson Bell

of God. Listen, listen to the thunder of his voice

and the rumbling that comes from his mouth.

God thunders wondrously with his voice;

he does great things that we cannot comprehend.

For to the snow he says, "Fall on the earth;"

and the rain serves as a sign

so that all whom he has made may know him. *Refrain.*

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Anna Grace Gilbert

Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined

its measurements when the morning stars sang together

and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy? Have you

entered into the springs of the sea, or walked

in the recesses of the deep?

Have the gates of death been revealed to you,

have you even comprehended the expanse of the earth? *Refrain.*

The Almighty is great in power and justice and abundant

Caroline McRae

in righteousness. Who has cut a channel for the torrents

of rain, to bring rain on a land where no one lives

to make the ground put forth grass? Can you bind the star clusters

together or cause the stars to move through the sky?

Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?

Can you establish their rule on earth? Can you lift up

your voice to the clouds so that a flood of waters may cover you?

Can you send forth lightning? Who has put wisdom in the inward

parts or given understanding to the human mind?

Who has the wisdom to number the clouds? *Refrain.*

Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones

cry to God, and wander about for lack of food? Do you know

when the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the

calving of the deer? Can you number the months that they fulfill,

and do you know the time when they give birth, when they crouch

to give birth to their offspring. Who has let the wild ass go free

and graze upon the mountains? Is the wild ox willing to serve you?

Can you make the wings of the ostrich flap or give the horse

its strength? Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars, and spreads

its wings to the south? Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up

and makes its nest on high?

Hear this, O Job: stop and consider the wondrous works of God. *Refrain.*

## SILENCE

**LITANY OF PENITENCE** (responsive)

Clara Oakes

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Holy and merciful God, we confess to you and to one another, and to

the whole community 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.

**People: I will be humble, comforted that I am dust.**

Leader: 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.

**People: I will be humble, comforted that I am dust.**

Leader: We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness: The pride,

hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives, our self-indulgent appetites

and ways and our exploitation of other people, our intemperate love of

worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and

work,

**People: we confess to you, O God.**

Leader: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend

the faith that is in us,

**People: we confess to you, O God.**

Leader: 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,

**People: accept our repentance, O God.**

Leader: For all false judgements and uncharitable thoughts, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

**People: accept our repentance, O God.**

Leader: For our waste and pollution of your creation and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

**People: accept our repentance, O God.**

Leader: Restore us, O God, with your gracious love.

**People: I will be humble, comforted that I am dust.**

### IT IS A DUSTY WORLD

*Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.*

Those words are said repeatedly to each one of us who come to worship on the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday. Hearing these humbling words and receiving ashes does not require us to lament our finitude. Rather, taking these words seriously invites us to be grateful and courageous in using the gift of life and time we are given.

We are dust, so why delay in focusing on what is essential? Life is short and vulnerable. Almost overnight toddlers become teenagers, new acquaintances become trusted friends, discoveries become traditions. Today is the time to say “I love you.” Now is the time to take steps to become what we feel God is calling us to be.

We are dust, so why wait to build the community in which we want our grandchildren to live? Soon daffodils turn to roses, which yield to chrysanthemums, which turn to poinsettias, but only if someone plants and tends them. Weeds sprout on their own in our dust; flowers require nurture. Something grows somewhere every day; will it be azaleas or thorns?

We are dust, so why worry needlessly? We cannot change the cosmos, but we can nourish the earth of which we are part. We can disdain violence. We can clasp hands rather than clench fists. We cannot provide absolute security, but we can be good neighbors. God can do wonderful things in this soil of our lives. God can bring an Easter of endless joy!

We are dust, so take time during this penitential season of Lent to celebrate our faith which gives life and hope to dust. God graciously cares for eternity; our call is to live faithfully, gratefully and courageously here and now.

*Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of tenderness, and strengthen us to face our mortality, that we may reach with confidence for your mercy; in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (The Book of Common Worship, p. 222)*

*John Muntz*

### WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Rev. John Linton Muntz, Parish Associate

Peter Van Eenam, Organist and Choirmaster

Barbara Adamcik, Director of Youth and Connectional Ministries

Angela Grobe, Director of Children’s Ministries

Mary Boyd, Education Coordinator

Renee Wiesehuegel, Office Manager/Bookkeeper

Sandra Williams, Administrative Assistant

Rev. Friedrich Schilling, Jr., Pastor Emeritus

Debbie Bendy, *Abbey* Editor

#### Support our Youth, Feed Our World's Children, Hear a world-class Concert!!!

We hope to see you this Sunday evening 5:30 p.m. at our annual Cook-Off fundraiser!! The meal will be chili, soup, bread, and dessert! The monies collected from this event will help the youth fund their BIGGEST-EVER service project. We are hoping to fund and package more than 35,000 meals for the Stop Hunger Now organization! (Our goal is 35K because that's equal to the number of school children in Knoxville.) The meal packaging event will be on May 21!! And BONUS... how about a world-class concert afterwards? The Maryville College Concert Choir and their Jazz and Pop ensembles will be presenting a concert in the sanctuary after you finish our yummy chili, soup, bread, and dessert(s). The choir will be eating with us, so we will have a unique opportunity to meet everyone before the concert. You are invited to sign up to bring something! (Sign up sheets on the bulletin boards and office door.)

#### IMPOSITION OF ASHES *(The people uniting.)*

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

*The people are invited to come forward to receive ashes.*

“Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” – Genesis 3:19

#### THE LORD’S PRAYER

#### THE SENDING

\*HYMN NO. 301 (blue hymnal) Lord Jesus, Think on Me *Southwell*

#### \*BENEDICTION

#### \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

As you depart, you are invited to greet your neighbors with the words, “**Peace be with you.**” The appropriate response is: “**And also with you.**”

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**A LENTEN SERIES** will be offered each Wednesday evening beginning March 8 and continuing through April 12. We will gather at 5:45 p.m. for a simple meal of soup and bread, followed by a service of evening prayers in the sanctuary. This reflective time focuses on scripture, song and prayer as we prepare ourselves for Easter.

#### Lenten Study

Join Rev. John Muntz in the McKinnon Room at 10:00 a.m. Sunday mornings during Lent for a study about Sabbath. The series is an exploration of Sabbath as a rhythm of life that fosters care for creation, rebalances our relationship with work, grounds Sabbath in biblical teaching and tradition, connects Sabbath to justice, roots it in community, infuses Sabbath with joy, places Sabbath at the heart of loving God and neighbor, and ties Sabbath to the Lord's Day.

The video series features some of the country’s leading theologians, including Brian McLaren, Amy-Jill Levine, Dorothy Bass, Walter Brueggemann, and many others.

#### THE SESSION

##### Class of 2016

Jerry Faerber  
Vicki Mayfield  
Scott Porter  
Elizabeth Ridley  
Angela Shilling  
Youth Elder: Ethan Partelow  
Clerk of Session: Georgann Byerley

##### Class of 2017

Phil Barnette  
Bitsy Ingram  
William Milam  
Bryan Powell  
Brenda Seip

##### Class of 2018

Leigh Dunlap  
Steve Hoadley  
J.P. Mackay  
Linda Van Beke  
Michael Yates

#### TRUSTEES

John Smartt

Larry Ridley

Paul Jorden