



*Brookline  
Community Church*

*March 2, 2022*

*Ash Wednesday*

*Rev. Catherine A.  
Merrill, Minister*

**Prelude: *How Firm a Foundation***

**Call To Worship<sup>1</sup>**

**Precious Lord we gather in your presence not as refined Christians,  
but as works in progress. We gather to worship, we gather to share,  
we gather to be.**

**We welcome you, God, into our space, this place of gathering.**

**Welcome. Welcome. Welcome.**

**(a moment of silence as we open our hearts to God and to each other)**

**we welcome the threatened**

**we welcome the dangerous**

**we welcome the unsure and the arrogant**

**we welcome the single, the married, the divorced**

**we welcome the annoying, insufferable, and just plain mean.**

---

<sup>1</sup> The Call to Worship was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Prayer for a Gathering, Perhaps for Ash Wednesday," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted February 24, 2014, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2014/02/25/prayer-for-a-gathering/> (accessed February 27, 2022).

**we welcome the clean  
we welcome the dirty  
we welcome the majority and the minority  
we welcome the activist and the apathetic  
we welcome the optimist, the pessimist, and the realist**

**we welcome the healthy  
we welcome the sick  
we welcome the addict, the felon, the fraud  
we welcome all who rejoice and all who suffer  
we welcome those who agree and those who disagree**

**We welcome all, Lord, because in this space “they” become “we” and we are your children.**

**We welcome the past, the present, and the future whatever each may hold because you are in all three, and we welcome you, and you, and you.**

**Amen.**

**Let us pray the Lord's Prayer together:**

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

**Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10, p. 940**

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.

**Reflection on the Scripture: How will you wear your ashes?**

## **Prayer of Confession & Assurance of Pardon<sup>2</sup>**

Lord, one day water fell on this forehead,  
that today bears the seal of the ash...  
It was the water of baptism,  
that reconciled us with you.  
It has not yet dried completely, but has clouded,  
with the dust of the road.

Today, on this Ash Wednesday,  
I come to you. To you, Lord,  
you are the source of "living water."  
I admit my faults,  
I did what is bad in your sight.  
You seek me, you wait for me,  
you understand me, you welcome me,  
with my fragility in tow,  
I keep marching toward you.

I trust in you.  
One day your hand will caress my forehead,  
you will heal all of my wounds,  
and your face will shine on me.

## **HYMN: #642 "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"**

I want Jesus to walk with me.	When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
I want Jesus to walk with me.	When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
All along my pilgrim journey, Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.	When my head is bowed in sorrow, Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me
In my trials, Lord, walk with me.	
In my trials, Lord, walk with me.	
When my heart is almost breaking, Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.	

## **Imposition of Ashes**

---

<sup>2</sup> The Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Ash Wednesday Prayer from Argentina," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted February 4, 2013, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2013/02/04/ash-wednesday-prayer-from-argentina/> (accessed February 27, 2022).

### **Commission and Benediction**

**All:**           **Grant us the courage to accept the healing you offer  
and to turn again toward the sunrise of your reign,  
that we may walk with you in the promise of peace  
you have willed for all the children of the earth,  
and have made known to us in Christ Jesus.**

**Leader:**       The God of reconciliation bless you,  
the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you,  
and the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen you  
this day and forevermore.

### **Postlude: *Be Thou My Vision***

*Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.*

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, the 40-day preparation for Easter. In the Bible, ashes expressed grief. Christians place (or “impose”) ashes on our foreheads as an external sign of repentance we feel for how far we have strayed from whom God is calling us to be. When the ashes are imposed, we will repeat Genesis 3:19, which God said to Adam and Eve when they were turned out of the Garden of Eden. You may respond with silence or by saying “I am dust” or “I will remember” or “Amen.”

The ashes are made from palms used during the celebration of Palm Sunday in earlier years. They will fall off naturally, although they can also be washed off at the end of the day.

### **Household Prayer: Morning<sup>3</sup>**

Lord Jesus, help me be your disciple today. If I receive rebuke from anyone, let me suffer it with grace. If I receive commendation, let me accept it without vanity. Strengthen my hope in the treasure that endures, that I may know with you the joy of heaven. Amen.

### **Household Prayer: Evening**

O God, my heart has been stained with the sin of this world; my spirit is weary and my joy has grown dim. With the psalmist I pray: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection**

How can I give alms, pray, or fast without regard for the attention of others? How does Jesus’ admonition to do these acts in secret compare to his earlier command in the Sermon on the Mount: “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16)? What is the reward that God gives to those who give alms, pray, and fast?

---

<sup>3</sup> The Morning & Evening Prayer and Question for Reflection are reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion*. Copyright 2014.