



Ash Wednesday
March 2, 2022

Ascension Lutheran Church
1105 N. Washington Blvd.
Ogden, UT 84404

Offerings may be placed in the offering tray at the back of the nave by the baptismal font.

Introduction—Preparing the Canvas...again.

We invite you to write on the paper given to you upon your entrance—write a concern, regret or lament—anything that may weigh heavy on your heart that you would like to entrust to God this Lenten season.

We will collect them privately in a paper bag.

They will be burned inside the bag so that no one will be reading what you have written.

We will then use them later in the service to prepare the canvas of our Lenten Journey.

Welcome

P Welcome to this Ash Wednesday service, the beginning of our Lenten journey...

Call to Worship

sung by cantors as we prepare our concerns, laments, and regrets to be collected during our opening hymn on page 4.

♪ ♪ What in our lives do we dream about for tomorrow, ♪ ♪
void of sorrow?

Time spent regretting decisions of our yesterdays,
mistakes we made?
Sometimes we get what we get,
life disappoints us and yet,
God is still here and somehow,
this faith is good enough.

P Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a time when we aspire to make some room for deeper introspection and practices that will draw us into the love and assurance of faith.

But sometimes faith can feel uncertain. We can feel “less than,” perceiving that others seem to be able to be “more faithful” and “better than me” in their practices and beliefs.

This Lent, rather than trying to be “the best,” we’ll seek to accept ourselves one day at a time and “reach for a faith that is never perfect, but good enough.”

(All)



What in our lives do we dream a-bout for to-mor-row, void of sor-row?

Time spent re-grett-ing de-ci-sions of our yes-ter-days, mi-stakes we made?

Some-times we get what we get, life dis-ap-points us and yet, _____

God is still here and some-how, this faith is good e-nough.

Calling on God

L Let us pray: Holy One, Merciful God,

All make yourself known to us.

Be present with us in this often troubled journey of life.

Create in us hearts that are open to transformation.

**Give us the patience of practice in this Lenten journey—
ordering our days with time enough to be with you. Amen.**

Be Still and Know

Verse 1

Be still and know that He is God. Be still and know that He is holy.
Be still oh restless soul of mine, bow before the Prince of Peace,
Let the noise and clamor cease. Be Still.

Verse 2

Be still and know that He is God. Be still and know that He is faithful.
Consider all that He has done. Stand in awe and be amazed,
And know that He will never change Be still.

Verse 3

Be still and know that He is God. Be still and know He is our Father
Come rest your head upon His breast, listen to the rhythm of
His unfailing heart of love, beating for His little ones
Calling each of us to come. Be still... be still.

CCLI Song # 2758912

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Honest Questions, Compassionate Response

P Jesus used the word “hypocrite” to describe those who put on airs in public to make people believe that they were holy, that their religious practice was... well... perfect. But their hearts were actually not in the practice, rather in the rewards that public approval could bring them—which is here today, often gone tomorrow.

P Sometimes it is life itself that robs us of the shiny, perfect life that we had planned for ourselves.

A diagnosis.

A broken heart.

A lost opportunity.

What places in your life and faith could you begin to loose from the chains of perfectionism?

Let us take a moment to reflect and confess our need for God's grace.

Silence is kept for self reflection.

Hear this compassionate word from the prophet Isaiah: "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?...

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly."

Know that already, God is offering us freedom from the bonds of perfection, inviting us to break the yoke of what "should be" so that we might discover what "might be" when we honor the small steps that are actually possible, in this moment, for this one day.

*And know, that despite our sometimes faltering steps,
in the name of Jesus Christ, you are being forgiven, even now.*

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

Glory to God! Amen.

Sharing the Peace

In our continued physical distancing out of love for the health of one another, we will share the peace of our risen Lord by "speaking" that peace through sign language.

P Christ become Peace with you.

All And also with you.

A reading from Joel, the 2nd chapter

Because of the coming Day of the LORD, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

¹Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—
²a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread upon the mountains
a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
nor will be again after them in ages to come.

¹²Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

¹⁴Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God?

¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged;
gather the children, even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD,

and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' ”

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

L The word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation

Please stand as you are able.

*♪ ♪ Turn your eyes upon Jesus ♪ ♪
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.*

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Gospel Reading

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 6th chapter.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Mt 6:1-6, 16-21

P The Word of God that is still speaking,

All Praise to you, O Christ.

You may be Seated

Thoughts about an Imperfect Life and Faith

Pr. Debra Jimenez

“Perfection is impossible. Transformation isn’t.”

Hymn of the Day

Please stand as you are able.

Change My Heart Oh God

Chorus

Change my heart oh God, Make it ever true
Change my heart oh God, May I be like You

Verse

You are the potter, I am the clay
Mold me and make me,
This is what I pray

CCLI Song # 1565

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You may be Seated

Picking up where we left off...A Collective Work

P Your concerns, laments, and regrets are now ashes.

You may have already thought of other things that you did not write down, or you may have entered the service after they were taken to be burned, but that's OK. God knows. These ashes hold *all* the things that weigh heavy on our hearts. These ashes hold our burdens.

For those who were here at Ascension when the pandemic began nearly two years ago, these canvases might look familiar. We then, began our Lenten journey by preparing these canvases with the ashes of our concerns, laments, and regrets . They are the foundation upon which we each added a brush stroke to create a collective work of our individual lives.

But just two weeks into our Lenten journey, the pandemic forced us into our homes to care for ourselves and each other, worshipping via video and unable to complete our season's work together. There are strokes here from some who left us, yet they are still a part of the body and work of this community. Tonight we will "begin again" layering another foundation over the work that was started two years ago, previous brushstrokes peeking through the layers.

We now build on what came before.

Tonight we will engage an action to help us understand the nature of God's divine love. If a canvas is not prepared properly, the paint that is applied is in danger of being wasted or distorted as it soaks through the canvas.

So we will combine the concerns, laments, and regrets with a binding agent and paint these canvases.

They remind us that God takes our burdens and mixes them with unconditional love and never-ending second chances and creates something even more beautiful with our lives and our world.

Imposition of Ashes

P In the Ritual of Ashes, we are reminded that we are part of the dust and debris of this earth. Our lives have times of growth and decay and death. Placing the sign of the cross on our foreheads with ashes is a reminder of this difficult reality but also a reminder of the presence of God, the grace of Christ, and the power of the Spirit in all of it.

After you come forward to receive the imposition of ashes you are invited to offer a brushstroke with the ashes of lament to create the background for our collective work of art.

On My Heart Imprint Your Image



On my heart im - print your im - age, bless - ed Je - sus, king of grace,



that life's trou - bles nor its plea - sures ev - er may your work e - rase.



Let the clear in - scrip - tion be: Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me,



is my life, my hope's foun - da - tion, all my glo - ry and sal - va - tion!

Text: Thomas H. Kingo, 1634–1703; tr. Peer O. Strömme, 1856–1921, alt.
Music: DER AM KREUZ, Johann B. König, 1691–1758

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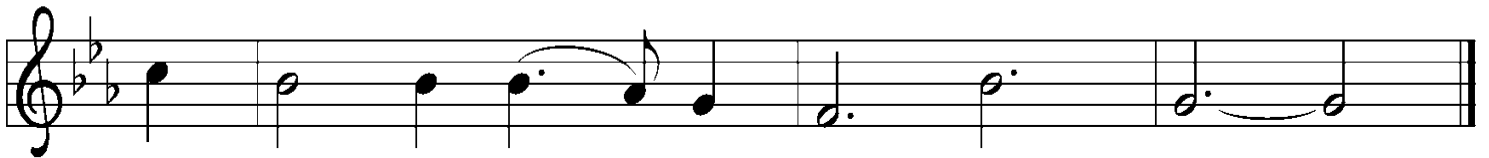
Just As I Am, without One Plea



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was
2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y_a con - flict,
4 Just as I am; thy love un-known has bro - ken ev - 'ry



shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
man - y_a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,



O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789-1871

Music: WOODWORTH, William B. Bradbury, 1816-1868

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After all who desire ashes have received them...

P Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

All Amen.

Holy Communion

Please stand as you are able.

P Christ looks upon each one with love and says,

All “**you are welcome at my table.**”

P Christ looks upon each one with compassion and says,

All “**whatever troubles you, bring it here.**”

P Christ looks upon each one with grace and says,

All “**whatever you’d like to leave behind, do it here.**”

P Will you come?

Will you bring your troubles?

Will you shed all that is unnecessary in your life?

This is the place where you need not be perfect,
you need not be sure of yourself or your faith,
you need not feel whole and right with the world.

Jesus invited many to his tables and in doing so, he assured them of their place in the illogical reign of love and grace.

He just wanted them to be hungry for relationship—

hungry to look across a table into another’s eyes,

to break open their lives,

and lift a cup in the midst of the hard times and hear,

“this is for all, and so this is for you, beloved.”

On the night in which he was betrayed our Lord Jesus took bread
and gave thanks;

broke it and gave it to his disciples saying:

Take and eat; this is my body given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

P After supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat this bread and drink of this cup
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again.

All Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

The Lord's Prayer

P I invite you to connect with the people around you—
Take a moment, look around, for as you look upon the Body of Christ,
you do indeed, turn your eyes upon Jesus.
Now gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught.

All 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 and ever. Amen.

The Invitation

P Christ has prepared the feast.
Come to the table where all are welcomed home.

Communion Songs

You may be Seated

Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling



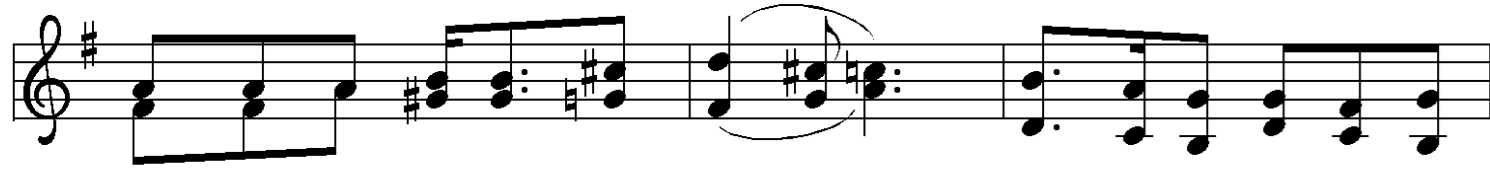
1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for



you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,



watch - ing for you and for me.
mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!
par - don for you and for me. Come home, come home!"



You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847-1909
Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson

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Post Communion Blessing and Prayer

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All Amen.

P I invite you to open your palms upward.

Take a moment to be still, to “freeze frame” this moment.

It is here that we come to be transformed by God’s grace
into the beauty God intends.

We have prepared the canvases with the ashes of our burdens and
God’s unconditional love and never ending second chances.

Know that all we must do is open ourselves to receive.

The master artist of this moment—of all moments—
is at work to restore us even now.

Let us pray.

Tender and merciful one,

at your feast, you fed us who brought nothing,
turning our emptiness into joy.

Filled with your abundant grace, send us now to be ministers of
reconciliation, mending broken hearts, working for justice,
and striving for peace among all people,
in the name of Jesus Christ.

All Amen.

Benediction

Please stand as you are able.

P And now, may the God who loves all of creation, especially the imperfect bits, and Jesus, our companion along this crooked path called life, and the Holy Spirit, who loves to improvise in surprising ways, † go with you, dwell among you, and give you joy.

