

Ash Wednesday
People's Congregational Church
February 2023



† PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY OF LENT †

GATHERING MUSIC

Sharon Neuenfeldt

*You are invited to quietly greet others as you settle into sacred time and space
Candles represent the light of Christ among us*

RINGING THE BELL

PRELUDE

“Sanctify me Holy”

Franz Haydn

WORDS OF WELCOME

Pastor Clare Gromoll

*CALL TO AWARENESS

Rolf Dittmann

One Jesus said, “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it shall not have life.” In Lent, we come to know that the only way to life and healing and wholeness comes paradoxically through letting go—through a thousand small deaths. We cannot come to the light unless we are willing to enter the darkness. Fullness of life often means the death of lesser things.

All Come, let us enter this season of Lent, willingly or reluctantly. Let us embrace the life that Jesus offers and enter this sacred season, trusting in God’s everlasting power to give life, to heal, and to make whole.

* *Sitting or standing*

*OPENING HYMN

“Forty Days and Forty Nights”

#205

1 For - ty days and for - ty nights you were fast - ing in the wild;
2 Shall we not your sor - row share and from world - ly joys ab - stain,
3 Then if Sa - tan on us press, flesh or spir - it to as - sail,
4 So shall we have peace di - vine: ho - lier glad - ness ours shall be;
5 Keep, O keep us, Sav - ior dear, ev - er con - stant by your side;

For - ty days and for - ty nights tempt - ed, and yet un - de - filed.
Fast - ing with un - ceas - ing prayer, strong with you to suf - fer pain?
Vic - tor in the wil - der - ness, grant that we not faint or fail!
'Round us, too, shall an - gels shine, such as served you faith - ful - ly.
That with you we may ap - pear at the e - ter - nal Eas - ter - tide.

The son of a doctor in Bombay, George Hunt Smytton became a priest in the Church of England. He published several collections of verse. This hymn was one of three Lenten hymns that appeared in The Penny Post (1856).

Tune: HEINLEIN 7.7.7.7.
Attrib. to Martin Herbst, 1676

† ACKNOWLEDGING OUR HUMANNESS AND GOD’S GRACE †

*PRAYER OF LONGING

Creating God, center of the world you have made, we come to you in this season of turning and returning. We long to seek you with our whole hearts, knowing you are our source and our destiny. In the midst of life, we return to you, we turn toward you. We thank you that you receive even the broken heart, the troubled conscience, the conflicted spirit. Seeking you in secret, may we turn around to honor you among humanity; through Jesus Christ, our path homeward to you. Amen.

prayerful silence

*SUNG PRAYER RESPONSE

“Kyrie”
Sing three times

Russian Orthodox tradition

The musical score is written for two voices (Soprano and Bass) in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The first system contains the lyrics: "Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Ky - ri - e e - lei - son." The second system contains the lyrics: "Ky - ri - e e - lei son." The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes, with some notes tied across measures. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment with a mix of quarter and eighth notes.

From The New Century Hymnal, Copyright © 1995 The Pilgrim Press.

*ASSURANCE OF GRACE & INVITATION TO PASS THE PEACE

We share a sign of peace with those gathered with us now (in-person, virtually)

We extend the peace throughout the week (by phone, email, text)

One The peace of Christ be with you!

All And also with you!

† REFLECTING ON THE LENTEN JOURNEY †

A READING FROM THE PROPHETS

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 voice 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 God?

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 like the dawn—and your healing will break forth like lightning! Your integrity will go before you, and the glory of God will be your rearguard.

Cry, and God 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.

God 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 waters 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.

A READING FROM THE PSALTER

Psalm 51: 1-3, 6-7, 9-13, 15

Chalice Hymnal #743

liturgist reads verses, all join in sung response

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God.

R

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
**according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.**
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 **For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me. R**
- 6 You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 9 **Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities. R**
- 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- 12 **Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.**
- 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
- 15 **O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise. R**

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS

Matthew 6: 1–6, 16–21

“Beware of practicing your piety before others to attract their attention; if you do this, you will have no reward from 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 synagogue and the 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 fast, don't look dismal like the hypocrites. They deliberately neglect their appearance to let everyone know that 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.”

MESSAGE

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY DUET

Claire & Michael Bjork

“Wondrous Love”

Southern folk hymn | arr. Milburn Price

What wondrous love is this, O my soul! O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down;
When I was sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down, beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing—
To God and to the Lamb, who is the great I AM,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme, I will sing.

To give electronically, scan the QR code below.

We also gladly receive checks mailed to the church office.



PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God, we come to you in plenty and in want. Teach us to receive without embarrassment when we have needs, and help us to give without reservation when we have abundance. Bless and multiply these gifts, and unwrap our hearts to you every day. Amen.

† SHARING THE BREAD OF LIFE AND CUP OF SALVATION †

Holy Communion is open to members and friends of all ages.

*We welcome one another in the name of Jesus,
whom we follow in the way of radically inclusive love.*

INVITATION AND COMMUNION PRAYER

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE & BLESSING

SHARING THE BREAD OF LIFE & THE CUP OF BLESSING

Pastor Clare will cue us when it is time to partake of the elements

COMMUNION HYMN

“Let Us Break Bread Together”

#330

Let us break bread together on our knees;
Let us break bread together on our knees;
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine together on our knees ...

*CLOSING PRAYER

We remember that it was you, God, who called Jesus. And it is you who calls us, sustains us, and brings us on the homeward journey. The bread and the cup are heart food for the winding and rough road ahead. The mark of ashes reminds us that even in the deepest valleys of despair, you are present with us. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

see next page

“Dust and Ashes Touch Our Face”

#186

Unison

1 Dust and ash - es touch our face, mark our fail - ure and our
 2 Dust and ash - es soil our hands— greed of mar - ket, pride of
 3 Dust and ash - es choke our tongue in the waste-land of de -

fall - ing. Ho-ly Spir-it, come, walk with us to - mor-row,
 na - tion. Ho-ly Spir-it, come, walk with us to - mor-row
 pres - sion. Ho-ly Spir-it, come, walk with us to - mor-row

take us as dis - ci - ples, washed and wak-ened by your call - ing.
 as we pray and strug-gle through the mesh-es of op - pres - sion.
 through all gloom and griev-ing to the paths of res - ur - rec - tion.

Refrain

Take us by the hand and lead us, lead us through the des - ert sands,

bring us liv - ing wa - ter, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.

*BENEDICTION

*RECEIVING THE ASHES

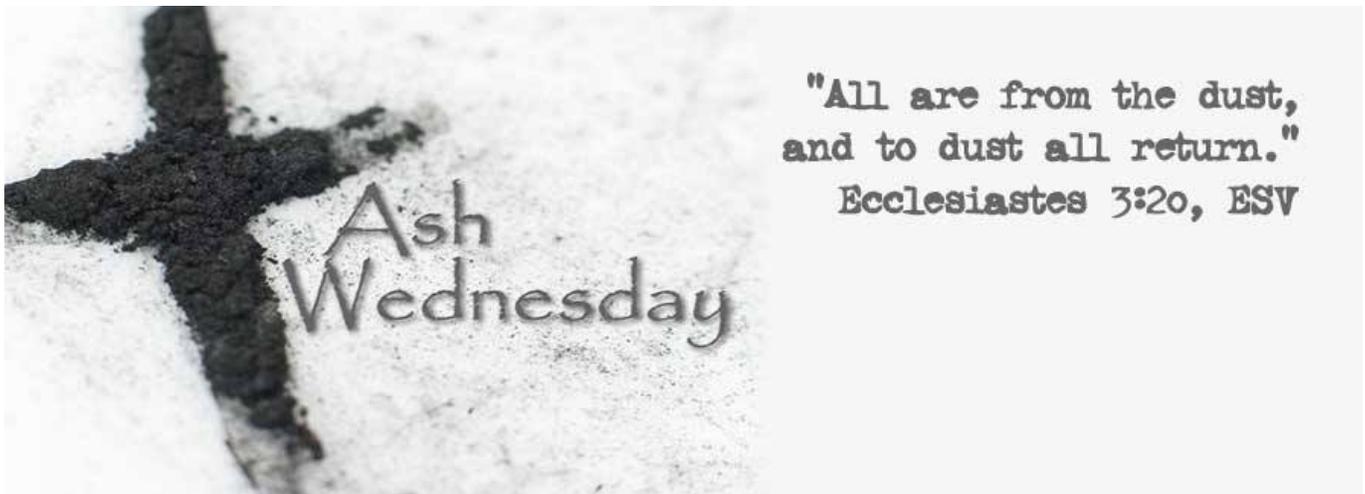
*As you depart, you may receive the mark of ashes on your forehead
or on your hand by holding out your hand.*

POSTLUDE

"I Will Give You Peace"

Lunde

We carry the light of Christ with us in all times and spaces



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Thank you to all who made this evening wonderful: Music Dir. Michael Bjork, Worship Accompanist Sharon Neuenfeldt & Claire Bjork (beautiful music), Rolf Dittmann (liturgist), Jenni Shaller (Chancel decoration), Jane Hanson & Bob Dickie (greeters), Paul Spilseth & Bob Dickie (recorders), Sue Favilla (soup supper host)



People's Congregational Church

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Easter Flowers

Let's create a beautiful garden in our Sanctuary on Easter Sunday! Members and friends are invited to place their own orders online to contribute flowers to our People's Church Easter garden. We will each take our flowers home or to a loved one after worship on April 9th.

To place an order for Easter flowers:

1. Go to www.gertensfundraising.com
2. Enter the Store ID code (63) into the text field and click 'Enter ID to Continue'.
3. Choose from among 11 different flowering plants!
4. After you have placed your order, please contact Kimberly to name any loved ones you wish to remember or honor with your flowers.

If you can not access the internet to order your flowers, please contact Kimberly for assistance. **THE LAST DAY to order is March 1.** We hope many will contribute to a beautiful Easter garden on the Chancel!

Lent & Easter People's Congregational Church

309 North Third Street | Bayport
peoplescongregational.org | 651-439-5667

Ash Wednesday, Feb 22

6:00 pm supper | 6:45 pm service

Wednesday Evenings in Lent, Mar 1-29

Hybrid Format

5:30 pm | **Contemplative Worship**

6 pm | **Soup Supper**

6:30-7:15 pm | **Discussion of "The Five Invitations"**

*(Don't Wait, Welcome Everything, Bring Your Whole Self,
Find a Place of Rest, Cultivate Don't Know)*

People's Book Club welcomes you. Reading the book is optional. Valley Bookseller (Stillwater) has copies at 15% off the \$17.99 list price.

THE FIVE INVITATIONS

*Discovering What Death Can Teach
Us About Living Fully*

FRANK OSTASESKI
Foreword by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D.

*Frank is a pioneer in spiritual care at the end of life. He embodies the wisdom
and compassion he shares in these original and compelling pages.
JOHN KARRISZ, DDS, author of *Just Catastrophe Living*

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday | April 2, 10 am

Many churches @ the lift bridge (Stillwater)

Maundy Thursday | April 6, 7 pm

@ St. Peter's UCC (Stillwater)

Good Friday | April 7, 7 pm

@ Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Bayport)

Easter Sunday | April 9

@ People's Park: Sunrise service, 6:30 am

@ People's Church: Breakfast, 9 am ~ Egg hunt, 9:30 am ~ Worship, 10 am