

First United Presbyterian Church of Dale City (PCUSA)

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Ash Wednesday Service

February 17, 2021

7:00 PM

The Reverend Adam C. Bowling - Pastor

Adam.Bowling@fupcdc.org

828.448.8914

WELCOME**+ CALL TO WORSHIP**

We are invited—

**Into the story,
Into this place,
Into this hour of worship.**

We are invited—

**Into reflection,
Into community,
Into our own spiritual journeys.**

We are invited—

**The broken and bruised,
The hopeful, the new,
The faithful, the doubting,
The wondering, the waiting.**

We are invited—

Because God so loved;

So listen, trust the invitation, and bring your whole self.

All are invited here.

+ OPENING HYMN

Bless the Lord

544

Becca Anderson, Musician

CALL TO CONFESSION

Call to Confession by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Ash Wednesday is a special day because it marks the start of something new. We are standing at the door of a journey into deeper faith, and God is inviting us in.

However, we know that we cannot grow deeper and be transformed without God's help. So as we begin this season, we confess together, asking for God's participation in this new beginning. We are asking God to hold open the door. Let us pray. . .

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *Adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*

Holy God—

We know that you are near,

For you are always here, gathered among us, just a breath away.

And despite knowing your nearness, we still stumble over ourselves,
unsure of how to pray.

Bring our hearts into the room.

So often we talk to you like a stranger,

Praying prayers of small talk about the weather and surface level concerns.

We keep genuine fear and doubt tucked into corners, out of sight, out of mind.

Bring our hearts into the room.

And so often we try to think our way to you,

As if we could use logic or our minds alone to explain your great unknown.

We forget what we knew as children; we forget how to feel our way to you.

Bring our hearts into the room.

And too regularly, we limit our experience of you to one hour a Sunday,

Missing your constant invitation into the holiness all around us.

Forgive us. Guide us.

Bring our hearts into the room.

We are here, God. We want to begin again.

Bring our hearts into the room.

Hear us now, as we continue to confess, in the silence of our hearts. . .

(A time of Silent Confession)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON *Assurance of Pardon by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*

Friends, whether you are standing at the door of a deeper faith journey,

Unsure of what comes next,

Or running your way through that threshold,

You are claimed, forgiven, and loved by God.

Again and again, we are forgiven.

Again and again, we are loved.

Again and again, we are invited in.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Creator God,
There is a rumbling in us that won't let go.
It stirs in us like the wind stirs leaves—inviting us to move, drawing us forth.
When we're quiet, we know that rumble is the Holy Spirit,
Dancing love awake in us.
So we're here.
And we're still.
And we're quiet.
And on this first day of Lent, we're asking you to draw near.
As we hear your scripture read aloud, open the door for us to move.
Invite us in. Rumble us awake.
Gratefully we pray,
Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 NRSV

Blow 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—
² a 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.

¹² Yet even now, says the Lord,
 return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend 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.

¹⁴ Who 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?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;

call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶ gather 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.

¹⁷ Between 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?'"

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE

SILENT MEDITATION

+ HYMN OF RESPONSE

Sign Us with Ashes (verses 1,4,6)

Chris Anderson, Musician

433

Refrain:

Sign us with ashes, merciful God,
children of dust, as to dust we return.

Sign us with ashes, merciful God.

Mark us and make us your own.

1 Surely, you alone can save us.
You pay our price with precious blood.
Reaching through your great compassion,
you lift up your people with love. **(Refrain)**

4 Surely, you alone can free us.
You break the bonds of guilt and sin.
Bracing, till we walk uprightly,
you bolster our hope once again. **(Refrain)**

6 Surely, you alone redeem us.
You fill our dust with holy breath.
Bursting from the grave in glory,
you rise from the ashes of death! **(Refrain)**

+ Affirmation of Faith

Affirmation of Faith by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art Lsanctifiedart.org

We believe in an inviting God
Who invites the poor and the sick,
The outcast and the lonely,
The immigrant and the refugee,
The awkward and the abrasive,
The young and the innocent.
We believe God invites the best and the worst—
In all of us.

We believe God invites us to:
A life of faith,
A crowded table,
A messy church,
A deeper truth,
A resilient joy,
A place to belong,
A family among strangers,
A world that is just,
And a love that knows no bounds.

We believe this invitation exists for all people.
We believe this invitation exists for us.

And when we miss the call or ignore the invite,
We believe that God invites us again.
Thanks be to God for that invitational Spirit. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise. . .

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*Dana Van Slyke, Soloist*)

Albert Hay Malotte

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

Music during Communion

Create in Me a New Heart

Anonymous, Arr. Mark Hayes

Justin Streletz, Pianist

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord God, in deep gratitude for this moment, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to you. Take us out to live as changed people because we have shared the living bread and cannot remain the same. Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us. So, Lord, may we live to your glory, both as inhabitants of earth and citizens of the commonwealth of heaven. Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

If you are worshiping with others, you can mark your neighbors forehead with palm ash, or with oil, in the sign of the cross. If you are worshiping alone, you may use a mirror and mark yourself with the sign of the cross, saying:

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

(Genesis 3:19)

+ SENDING HYMN

Jesus, Remember Me

227

Becca Anderson, Musician

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

+ CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Adapted from a Charge and Benediction by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

As you leave this space,

May your mouth speak of God's goodness.

May your arms hold those in need.

May your feet walk toward justice.

May your heart trust its worth.

May your soul dance in God's grace.

And may this be your rhythm—

Again and again and again,

Until God's promised day.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.

Amen.

+ POSTLUDE

My Jesus, I Love Thee

Gordon, Arr. Carol Tornquist

Justin Streletz, Pianist

+ *Please rise in body or in spirit.*