**(Large Print)**

**Ash Wednesday**

**Springfield Presbyterian Church**

**March 2nd, 2022 7:00 pm**

**ENTER IN SILENCE**

*When you enter this space, enter into a sacred stillness. Discover the beauty of the presence of God here, beside you and within you. May you take this time to pause, contemplate the candle flame and the simple beauty of the cross, and the silent strength of prayer. These ordinary things invite us to live in tune with the Spirit. Sit quietly in the presence of the Holy as you would sit with a trusted friend. No words are necessary…*

*Before our Call to Worship, let us join in singing from Taize, “Come to Me” - we will repeat several times.*

**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: “Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart.” (Joel 2:12)

**People: Roll up your sleeves.**

Leader: Let down your guard.

**People: Come in from the storm.**

Leader: Make yourself at home.

**People: Pull up to the table.**

Leader: Release the tension in your jaw.

**People: Take a deep breath.**

Leader: Return to God,

**People: With all your heart.**

**ALL: May it be so.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

O God, you sent Christ in the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. You are our refuge and our strength, a present help in trouble. Therefore, we shall 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. Your love endures forever. Amen.

**PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD**

**PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION**

Loving Creator, we are here, telling stories of dust. We are here, trying to shake the dust out of our ears so that we might hear you clearly. We are here, hoping that showing up is the first step in returning to you. Scoop us up in your embrace and carry us to a place of truth. Clear the smog that makes it hard to see. Clear the dust that makes it hard to hear. We are at the edge of our seats. We are listening for you. Amen.

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

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!  
Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. 2 Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they delight to draw near to God. 3 ‘Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?’  
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day, and oppress all your workers. 4 Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. 5 Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? 6 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? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? 8 Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. 9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, 10 if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.   
11 The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.   
12 Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

**SECOND READING:** *2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10*

20So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2For 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! 3We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; 6by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

**LENTEN MEDITATION** *Burying Our Alleluias*

**SILENCE**

**INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE**

Beloved people of God: every year at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life in the paschal mystery. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I admit that this Lenten season can sometimes get a negative reputation. It’s viewed as the season in our faith when we give things up, when we prepare for the worst. However, I cannot help but imagine that God wants more for us than just six weeks of discipline or six weeks without our favorite thing. I cannot help but imagine that God wants a life for us so expansive that faith, joy, and hope flow over the edges. So we confess our sin, not because we have to suffer our way through Lent, but because the truth moves us one step closer to that expansive faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent, by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of love, and by meditating on God’s Word. Let us now confess our sin together:

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**People: Holy God, I confess: I don’t return to you fully. I share with you the pieces of my life that are convenient. I put on different hats in different rooms. I forget that I am called, invited, and loved with all that I am – including my mess, my beauty, my faith, and my doubt. Forgive me, and give me a heart that longs to return.**

Leader: Friends, God sees you. God hears you. God loves you. You are forgiven and claimed with all that you are. Rest in that good news.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**SILENT CONFESSION**

**SPECIAL MUSIC** *Kyrie Eleison* By: David Huntsinger

**BLESSING AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

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

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

**CHORAL RESPONSE***:  Bless the Lord*



**RECONCILIATION AND COMMENDATION** *[2 Corinthians 5:16-19]*

**From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know Him no longer in this way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!  All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.**

**THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**

**INVITATION**

Jesus has always been one to invite.

He said, “Drop your nets and follow me.”

He said, “Let the little children come to me.”

He said, “Stand up from your mat, you are healed.”

Jesus has always been one to invite, and that has not changed.

So friends, you are invited to this Table. Each and every one of us – with our doubts, our fears, our scars, our joy, our dreams, our hopes, our questions – we are invited to God’s table.

And here we will be met. Here we will be fed. Here we are given a taste of an expansive life that is full to the brim with love, overflowing with joy.

So come. Not because you must, but because you can. Come. You are invited. This table is for you.

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

God who knows us, we are amazed by you. Your love never runs out, your hope never runs dry, your joy never gives up.

We wish that we could be more like you in that way.

In a world that loves scarcity, your abundance is overwhelming.

In a world that knows fear, your joy is compelling. In a world that knows anxiety, your peace is captivating. We long for those things.

So today we ask you -- be with us in this journey. Be with us when compassion fatigue comes upon us. Be with us when stress makes it hard to breathe. Be with us when self-doubt pushes in close. Be with us when exhaustion becomes constant or when loneliness becomes our primary language. Be with us, and show us the way to the life you long for us.

Show us a life of expansive faith. Show us a life of overflowing joy.

Show us a life of absorbing beauty. Show us a life of engrossing purpose. Show us a life that is as honest, and rich, and meaningful as the one Jesus led.

And until that expansive and holy day, we will continue to gather at this holy Table. Until that day we will continue to look for you in our midst. So pour out a double portion of yourself onto this bread and cup so that we might catch a glimpse of your goodness. God, we are amazed by you. Your love never runs out. We are a grateful people, so together we sing with the angels here on earth and up above…

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**Heaven and earth all full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE**

Remembering all your mighty and merciful acts, we take this bread and this wine from the gifts you have given us and celebrate with joy the redemption won for us in Jesus Christ. For the bread that has been broken, for the cup of the covenant, we praise you for healing our hunger and thirst for better days.

Let us share this holy meal together.

**CLOSING PRAYER** (in Unison)

**God of compassion, through your Son Jesus Christ you reconciled your people to yourself. Following His example of prayer and fasting, may we obey you with willing hearts and serve one another in holy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**\* BENEDICTION**

As you leave this place,

May you be awestruck by the beauty of this world.

May you overflow with love for those around you.

In all of your living, and breathing, and being,

May you find yourself full to the brim with God’s Holy Spirit, and may it change your life.

In the name of the beloved and love itself – go in peace, full to the brim. Amen.

**\* CLOSING HYMN**  *Restore in Us, O God* #434

Restore in us, O God, the splendor of your love;  
Renew your image in our hearts, and all our sins remove.

O Spirit, wake in us the wonder of your power;  
From fruitless fear unfurl our lives like springtime bud and flower.

Bring us, O Christ, to share the fullness of your joy;  
Baptize us in the risen life that death cannot destroy.

Three-personed God, fulfill the promise of your grace,  
That we, when all our searching ends, may see you face to face.