



Out of the Ash

February 17, 2021

Ash Wednesday

Patrick Cherry

Music of Preparation (Video)

Were You There/What Wondrous Love is This?

Welcome & Instruction

Video? We have several new things at Saxe Gotha for the Lenten Season to help us refocus on God as we approach Easter. The Lenten Calendar, Mission Lexington donation list, prayerwalking guide and the new prayer wall can be found on saxegotha.org/Easter.

Call to Worship

LEADER: When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—

PEOPLE: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,

LEADER: and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—

PEOPLE: then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

LEADER: Today we gather together in the ashes...the ashes of unrequited dreams, dashed hopes, and broken promises. We gather in the ashes of our old lives. We gather in the ashes to recognize the truth about ourselves. We gather to begin in ash a journey that culminates into the witness a new dream, a new hope, and enduring promises. Let us worship our God!

Opening Hymn

#491 "Jesus I come"

Call to Confession & Prayer of Confession

(Read by Different Readers)

Brent McGee: God has set before us life and death. The choice is ours. Let us acknowledge our misuse of the liberty of choice. Let us pray.

—silent prayer—

Bootsie Wynne: Let us ask to be forgiven for the times when we have chosen badly, opting for the easy way of habit and social convention, rather than the higher and harder ways of Jesus.

Congregation: LORD HAVE MERCY

—silence—

Marshall Cochran: Let us confess that sometimes our choices have been made from rank selfishness, with scant concern for those around us, even for those who love us dearly.

CONGREGATION: CHRIST HAVE MERCY

—silence—

Madonna Moore: Let us ask to be forgiven for putting off decisions, for dithering and avoiding choice until opportunity has gone by.

CONGREGATION: LORD HAVE MERCY

—silence—

Brent McGee: Let us confess that we have at times made outwardly good decisions for the wrong reasons, driven by selfish motives.

CONGREGATION: CHRIST HAVE MERCY

—silence—

Bootsie Wynne: Holy God, Savior and Friend, we thank you that long before we face up to ourselves and frame our confessions, your mercy in Jesus is here waiting for us. We rest our mortal lives in your immortal Life, allowing your grace, mercy and peace to cleanse, refresh and straighten us.

CONGREGATION: LORD HAVE MERCY

—silence—

Marshall Cochran: Breathe into our humanity, loving God, that we may fully live.

CONGREGATION: CHRIST HAS MERCY

—silence—

Madonna Moore: Please breathe your Spirit in our minds, that our decision making may be pure and wise.

CONGREGATION: LORD HAVE MERCY

—silence—

Marshall Cochran: Breathe your Spirit on our lips, that our speech may witness to life and light and holy joy.

CONGREGATION: CHRIST HAVE MERCY

—silence—

Bootsie Wynne: Breathe your Spirit on our hands, that in their busyness they may serve you before all else.

CONGREGATION: LORD HAVE MERCY

—silence—

Brent McGee: Breathe your Spirit on our feet, that we may tread this earth with gentleness and respect. Through Christ Jesus, our liberator. Amen!

Lord Have Mercy (For What We Have Done)

Assurance of Forgiveness

Joel 2:12-13

“Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

The good news in Christ is that when we face ourselves and God with the awareness of our need, we are given grace to grow, and courage to continue the journey. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel, In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Sermon Bumper Video

Meditation

"Out of the Ash" [Scripture]

Special Music (Handbell Solo)

"Fairest Lord Jesus"

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Imposition of Ashes

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent, and Lent is the time to prepare for Easter. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed only in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I encourage you, therefore, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy and significant Lent by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of love, and by meditating on the Word of God. I encourage you to go to our church's website for creative and hands-on ideas for you and your family to do together.

We typically end this service with the sign of ashes, making the sign of the cross on each forehead. That's my favorite part, the most meaningful part of this service to me personally. This ancient sign reminds us of our frailty and the uncertainty of our human life. This year we are unable to impose ashes, we can't physically mark you with ashes this year, out of an abundance of caution because of Covid. But the truths to which the ashes point to are still just as evident and unchanging. Our bodies were created from the dust of the earth. We are reminded of our mortality, but we are also reminded that only by God's gracious gift are we given everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

As a reminder of these truths, join with me as we use our pointer finger to make the sign of the cross on our own foreheads. As we draw the vertical line, we will say: I am dust and to dust I shall return...and as we draw the horizontal line we will say: Let us turn away from sin and proclaim the Gospel.

Join me drawing the vertical line and repeat after me: {I am dust and to dust I shall return}

Join me in drawing the horizontal line and repeat after me: {Let us turn away from sin and proclaim the Gospel}

You have been marked by these truths. Now let us prepare ourselves for the Lord's Table as we continue our worship.

Hymn Before Communion

The Communion Hymn (#343 HOG)

COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Tonight, we gather around the Table of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you are participating at home, now will be the time that you need to grab your bread and grape juice as we join together in communion.

It may seem odd that some of us have gathered in person, while others are participating at home, but this isn't all that unusual as you think about it. When we are called to Christ's table, we are invited to a feast that extends beyond a particular church, individual denomination, and different nationalities in different places. Christ's table extends beyond time to include all the saints that have gone before us. Christ alone is the host of this table and he invites you to come, reflect, remember, and rejoice in His promises.

Prayer Before Communion & Lord's Prayer

Loving God,

Through your goodness

We have this bread and grape juice to offer,

Which has come forth from the earth

And human hands have made.

May we know your presence

In the sharing,

So that we may know your touch

And presence in all things.

We celebrate the life that Jesus has shared

Among his community through the centuries,

And shares with us now.

Made one in Christ

And one with each other,

We offer these gifts and with them ourselves,

A single, living act of praise.

And now we join our voices proclaiming the prayer Your Son Jesus taught us saying:

Our Father...

Words of Institution

The Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, he took the cup, saying, This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the saving death of the risen Lord, until he comes.

The Bread of Life broken for you.

The cup of salvation shed for many.

Communion Instructions

Short Reflective Communion Music

Piano Solo

Closing Prayer

O God, help us to use this season of Lent
to examine our attachments,
and to sense where You invite us
to live more simply and deeply.
Shine the light of Your love
into the private corners of our lives
where we have acquired so much clutter
that it has begun to restrict our freedom.
Grant us the strength to free ourselves
from appetites and needs that drive us
into taking, having and wanting
more than we need or have time for.
Teach us that in letting go we become free,
rather than deprived,
generous rather than covetous,
and spacious rather than restricted.
We offer You our Lenten observance,
and today we place our feet
on the road to Easter, and walk
the Way that You have walked before us. AMEN

Closing Instructions & Benediction

This evening you will be dismissed by row by one of our ushers. We ask that you please exit out the center doors and then you will be invited to take a small bag with your communion elements along with a prayer and instructions. You will also receive a small cross to serve as a reminder of the truths we proclaimed tonight. There is one bag per person, so please inform the ushers how many bags you will need when you get to the narthex. You will also be able to get a closer look at this beautiful picture created from charcoal ash by our artist in residence, Stacy.

Brothers and Sisters, we may begin this Lenten journey in ash, but we are reminded that our God does not leave us there. Out of the dust and ash God creates something beautiful. God with that assurance and leave with that promise. Go in Peace!

Postlude

"Italian Hymn"

Albert L. Travis
