



Pilgrim Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Ash Wednesday Morning Prayers
February 17, 2021
9:30 am

Today's service will be recorded.

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Call to Worship (*Genesis 2:7; 3: 19 Psalm 104: 29-30; John 1: 18*)

Friends and neighbors,
we pause to observe Ash Wednesday together as a faith community.

**We come to remember that God made us from fragile, blessed dust
And breathes through us the breath of life and love.**

One: From dust we are created in God's image
and to God's good dust we shall return.

With dust and oil we claim the mark of God's beloved creature.

One: Today we begin our 40-day Lenten journey
to discover who we are created to be as God's beloved.

**In daily practices of prayer and service.
we will embark upon this Lenten journey.**

One: We follow Jesus, God's Beloved Child,
bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh
In whom we see God's image most clearly.

**So come, let us pray for strength and imagination
to follow Jesus wherever he will lead us this Lent.**

Gathering Reflections

Scriptures: Isaiah 58:1-12, Ps. 51:1-4, 10-17

Prayer of Confession

One: Lord, come and help us clear all the debris from our hearts. Come and restore us to your presence. We have too long ignored you and wandered from your call. Open our ears, shatter our self-delusions, push us to see the kind of fast and repentance that you desire. Bring us back to you, merciful God.

All: Create in me a clean heart, O God.

One: You ask us to care for the earth but often we try to conquer and subdue it. We have poisoned our life-support systems of soil, water, and air with toxic waste. We have damaged our forests through clear-cutting and acid rain. Our oceans, lakes, and streams are littered with plastic and laced with sewage. We are annihilating our companion creatures at a rapid rate. May we repent and be repairers of the breach.

All: Create in me a clean heart, O God.

One: Nations war with nations so we might have cheap oil. Children die in poverty so we can have lower taxes. Migrant workers poison their bodies and lose their faculties that we might have cheaper food. Bombs kill innocents abroad as we fail to take care to divide enemy from bystander or demand that our government change. May we repent and be repairers of the breach.

All: Create in me a clean heart, O God.

One: We speak about justice but fail to act when injustice comes to our town or our ballot box. We speak about peace but fail to take our leaders to account when the war drums sound. We speak about healing but sit and watch our uninsured neighbors live in fear or drown in debt. We speak making our lives acceptable to the Lord, but walk away when it gets too hard. May we repent and be repairers of the breach.

All: Create in me a clean heart, O God.

One: In this Lenten season, when we fear and are doubtful, help us find the strength and courage of faith. When we are lonely and afraid, remind us of your healing love. When we are tempted to do nothing out of apathy or despair, call us to account again. Be with us, O Lord, and heal our spirits. May we work for your justice and be repairers of the breaches in our lives, our communities and our world.

All: Create in us clean hearts, O God. Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

The congregation is invited to practice the imposition of ashes, a reminder of our mortality and the eternal nature of God, by touching the cross of ashes on your card to your forehead or hand. “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return, but the steadfast love of God endures forever.”

A Litany of Forgiveness and Commitment

We acknowledge and confess our sins of thought, word and deed, and we humbly seek God’s forgiveness.

God hears the confession of our heart and lips. Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven all our sins, and by the power of the Holy Spirit we are empowered for new life.

We believe in the good news of Jesus Christ. From this moment forward we commit to walking in the ways of God’s love, peace and justice.

God’s peace be with you.

Benediction

Rev. Reebee Girash

Marked by a cross,
cherished and forgiven
We are traveling home.

Called to be holy,
called to be whole
We are traveling home.

Across deserts,
over mountains
We are traveling home.

God in our hearts,
God in our lives
We are traveling home.

Source notes: Benediction adapted from one by written by Ruth Burgess. Included in *Traveling to Easter with Jesus as our Guide*, posted on the website of Patmos Abbey—The Order of Saint Columba. <http://www.patmosabbey.org/>