



**February 26, 2023**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Ash Sunday, Year A**

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***St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA***

**Reverend Maggie Westaby**

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**Ash Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup> 2023, Year A**  
Reverend Maggie Westaby

**WELCOME**

Blessed be the Holy Trinity † one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace.

**Amen.**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

We come to worship God as the Lenten season begins, aware of our frailty and our failings.

**We come seeking God's mercy, acknowledging our mortality.**

Having received the waters of baptism, we are now marked with ashes.

**The treasures of this earth do not last; our treasure is in heaven, our heart's true home.**

**Amen.**

God desires truth in our inward being, receiving us as we are, broken and flawed. Seeking God's mercy, let us confess our sins before God.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Eternal God,

**We have broken our relationship with you, in ways too numerous to count. We hold onto earthly treasures and desires. We sin against our neighbors and we quarrel with one another. Forgive us, we pray, for we are broken in spirit. Keep us always in your presence so that we may be restored to the joy of your salvation. In Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen**

God's beloved, hear the good news. God breathed life into dust, creating the breath of life. God created you, and breathed breath into your lungs. God is continually creating all things new and pouring out forgiveness; in the name of Jesus † Christ your sins are forgiven.

**Amen.**

**OPENING HYMN**

## Restore in Us, O God



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -  
2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from  
3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -  
4 Three - per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.  
fruit - less fear un - furl our lives like spring - time bud and flow'r.  
tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.  
we, when all our search - ing ends, may see you face to face.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: BAYLOR, Hal H. Hopson, b. 1933

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### **WILL YOU MEET US?** *By Jan Richardson*

Will you meet us in the ashes,  
will you meet us in the ache  
and show your face within our sorrow  
and offer us your word of grace:

that you are life within the dying,  
that you abide within the dust,  
that you are what survives the burning,  
that you arise to make us new.

And in our aching, you are breathing;  
and in our weeping, you are here  
within the hands that bear your blessing,  
enfolding us within your love. Amen.

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Return to the LORD, your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. (*Joel 2:13*)

## **GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>16</sup>“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel of The Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**

## Bless Now, O God, the Journey

1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,  
 2 Bless so - journ - ers and pil - grims who share this wind - ing way;  
 3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.

the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.  
 your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus - tains the day.  
 We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow,

The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun - tain round,  
 We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;  
 but wait - ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.

then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.  
 to - geth - er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.  
 Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955-1993  
 Music: LLANGLOFFAN, Welsh tune, 19th cent.  
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## **BLESSING THE DUST** *By Jan Richardson*

All those days you felt like dust, like dirt,  
as if all you had to do was turn your face toward the wind  
and be scattered to the four corners

or swept away by the smallest breath as insubstantial—  
did you not know what the Holy One can do with dust?

This is the day we freely say we are scorched.  
This is the hour we are marked  
by what has made it through the burning.

This is the moment we ask for the blessing  
that lives within the ancient ashes,  
that makes its home inside the soil of this sacred earth.

So let us be marked not for sorrow.  
And let us be marked not for shame.  
Let us be marked not for false humility  
or for thinking we are less than we are

but for claiming what God can do  
within the dust, within the dirt  
within the stuff of which the world is made  
and the stars that blaze in our bones  
and the galaxies that spiral  
inside the smudge we bear. Amen.

## **IMPOSITION OF THE ASHES**

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

*All are welcome to come forward and receive the ashes. They are a reminder of the fleetingness of life, and our own mortality. As we open the deepest corners of our hearts before God, we see God's grace, forgiveness, and love in the shape of the cross of ashes. Harkening back to the cross we receive at baptism, when we are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. Knowing without a doubt, that we are forgiven. Forgiveness birthed from the Divine Mystery of Christ's crucifixion. When God's love, grace, and mercy saturated every molecule of creation, providing a space for all to be embraced in God's love for eternity.*

*Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Return to God with all your heart.*

## OFFERING

### OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious God,

Our treasures come only from you. It is only through your goodness, that we have received so much. We came into this life with nothing, and we leave the same way. Guide us, and inspire us, to share ourselves and the resources we have. May these offerings be used for the goodness of your creation.

**Amen.**

### GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

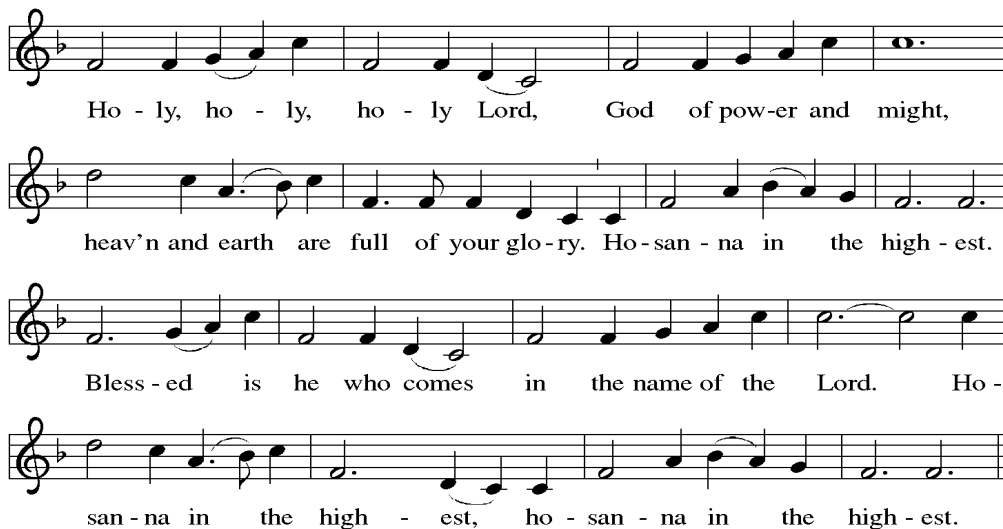
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

### PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

### HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass 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 and ever. Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

## **COMMUNION HYMNS**



## All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly



1 All who hun-ger, gath-er glad-ly; ho-ly man-na is our bread.  
2 All who hun-ger, nev-er strang-ers; seek-er, be a wel-come guest.  
3 All who hun-ger, sing to- geth-er, Je- sus Christ is liv- ing bread.



Come from wil-der-ness and wan-d'ring. Here in truth we will be fed.  
Come from rest-less-ness and roam-ing. Here in joy we keep the feast.  
Come from lone-li-ness and long-ing. Here in peace we have been fed.



You that yearn for days of full-ness, all a-round us is our food.  
We that once were lost and scat-tered in com-mu-nion's love have stood.  
Blest are those who from this ta-ble live their days in grat-i-tude.



Taste and see the grace e-ter-nal. Taste and see that God is good.  
Taste and see the grace e-ter-nal. Taste and see that God is good.  
Taste and see the grace e-ter-nal. Taste and see that God is good.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955-1993  
Music: HOLY MANNA, W. Moore, *Columbian Harmony*, 1825; arr. hymnal version  
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*Here Is Bread (483) I am sorry, but these lyrics are not available to download.*

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Embodied God,

At your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love.

**Amen.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **BLESSING**

May God, the giver of love, provide you with strength.

May Christ, the resurrection and the life, provide you with hope.

May the Holy Spirit, the source of rebirth, provide you with renewal.

And may the Three In † One, bless you in this Lenten journey.

**Amen.**

## **SENDING SONG**

## I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

1 I want Je - sus to walk with me; walk with  
 2 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me; walk with  
 3 When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

me; I want Je - sus to walk with me; walk with  
 when in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me; walk with  
 when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

me; all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,  
 when my heart is al - most break - ing,  
 when my head is bowed in sor - row,

Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.  
 Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me. walk with me.  
 Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

Text: African American spiritual  
 Music: SOJOURNER, African American spiritual, arr. hymnal version  
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### DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve in love.

**Thanks be to God.**

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