

Ash Wednesday Taize Worship – 2019

Welcome

Explanation of Lent & Taize

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent which is the 40 days leading up to Easter. This holy season within the Church is meant to be a time of refocusing on our spiritual practices as a way of preparing for Easter. We begin the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday which is meant to remind us of our need for forgiveness and our mortality, both problems solved by the resurrection of Christ.

We'll be worshiping tonight in the style of Taize. The Taize Community is an ecumenical Christian monastery in France. One of its trademarks is the singing of distinctive and prayers during candlelit services. Taizé music highlights simple phrases, usually lines from the Psalms or other pieces of scripture, sung repeatedly. The repetition is designed to help meditation and prayer.

I invite you now to settle into presence with God this evening. Get comfortable, feel free to close your eyes, there is nothing you'll need to read. Whenever we sing, I will begin, and you can join in whenever you'd like.

Sing: Come and Fill Our Hearts FWS #2157

sing many times through

Let us join our hearts in prayer..

Ash Wednesday Prayer UMH #353

O God, maker of every thing and judge of all that you have made,

From the dust of the earth you have formed us

and from the dust of death you would raise us up.

By the redemptive power of the cross,

create in us clean hearts and put within us a new spirit,

that we may repent of our sins

and lead lives worthy of your calling;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

Hear these words from Christ from the Gospel of Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Silent reflection

Now hear those same words again in a different way.. (The Message)

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Silent reflection

Sing: Shepherd Me, O God FWS #2058

sing many times through

Hear these words from Christ from the gospel of Luke 9:23-24

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.

Silent reflection

Sing: Bless the Lord FWS #2013

sing many times

Let us join together in a Prayer of Confession:

Adapted from Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, edited by Kimberly Bracken Long

Merciful God,... Open our eyes to see injustice in our world.

Give us courage to resist the powers that oppress the poor.

Open our ears to hear the cry of the needy.

Teach us generosity for sharing the abundance of your creation.

Open our minds to imagine an end to human strife.

Grant us wisdom to pursue the ways of peace.

Open our hearts to love our neighbors and our enemies near and far.

Give us desire to embody the compassion of Christ.

In the name of Christ we pray, AMEN

Blessing the Dust
For Ash Wednesday
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.

As you are led, come forward and receive the blessing of ashes as we sing...

Sanctuary FWS #2164

sing until everyone has received ashes

(After the imposition of ashes, a Declaration of Forgiveness adapted from Rev. Rachel Morse)

Our God is ever-merciful.

In infinite grace, God made us and called us good.

We are good.

In infinite compassion, God gave us the Christ, who said, "You are good."

We are good.

We are already forgiven, even before we asked.

Receive and accept the forgiveness of God through the grace of Jesus the Christ.

Sing: Jesus, Remember Me UMH #488

sing through 3 times

Go now, to pick up your cross and follow Christ on the Lenten journey.

In the name of the One who made us, the One who saves us,

and the One who goes with us now, go in peace.