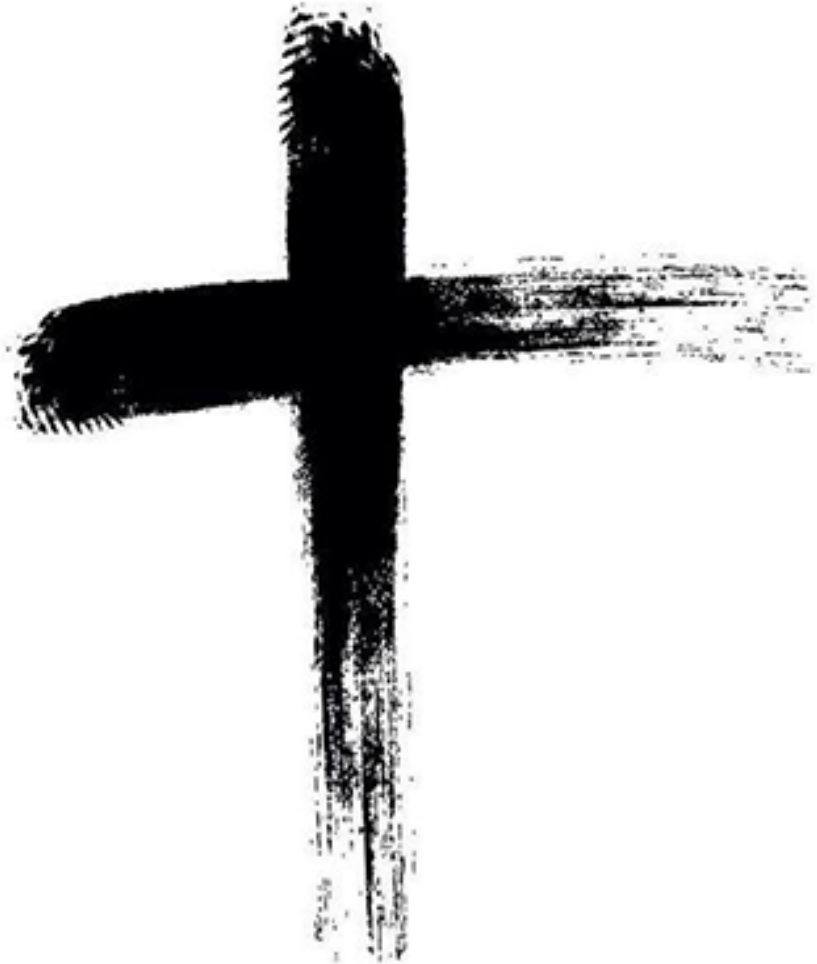


Ash Wednesday  
March 2, 2022



# Ash Wednesday

March 2, 2022

## The Words of Preparation

*Lent can sometimes get a negative reputation. It's viewed as the season in our faith when we give things up, 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 chocolate. I cannot help but imagine that God wants a life for us so expansive that faith, joy, and hope flow over the edges. So let us confess, not because we have to suffer our way through Lent, but because the truth moves us one step closer to that expansive faith.*

*Please silence your cellphones during this time of worship.*

## The Greeting

Rev. Kevin Gardner-Sinclair

## The Prelude

Jennifer Harberson

## The Call to Worship

Reader 1: Even now, declares the Lord, return to me.

Reader 2: Come as you are.

Reader 1: Let down your guard.

Reader 2: Come in from the storms of life.

Reader 1: Make yourself at home.

Reader 2: Pull up to the table of forgiveness.

Reader 1: Take a deep breath and release the tension in your life.

Reader 2: Return to God with all your heart.

## \*The Hymn of Lent

Congregation

*Even in the Desert* (see back)

## The Old Testament Lesson

Rev. Susan Reed

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; and gather the children. *Joel 2*

## **The Homily**

Rev. Kevin Gardner-Sinclair

### **The Prayer of Confession**

**Holy God, we confess: We don't return to you fully. We share with you the pieces of our lives that are convenient. We put on different hats in different rooms. We forget that we are called, invited, and loved with all that we are—including our mess, our beauty, our faith, and our doubt. Forgive us, and give us hearts that long to return.**

### **The Imposition of Ashes**

(Please walk forward to receive the sign of the cross on your hand or forehead)

### **The Words of Forgiveness**

Rev. Susan Reed

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. Thanks be to God, Amen.

### **The Prayer of Lent**

**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. As we begin our Lenten journey, we are at the edge of our seats, ready to follow you. Amen.**

### **\*The Hymn of Discipleship**

Congregation

*I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*, No. 576

### **Benediction**

Rev. Susan Reed

# Even in the Desert

## A Hymn for the Season of Lent

Tune: ARNSBERG

Text: Stephen M. Fearing, 2021

Music: Joachim Neander, 1680

Piano

E-ven in the de - sert, fruit - ful - ness can flour - ish; mer - cies bloom from  
 E-ven in the de - sert, we are blessed with trea - sures; gifts of God be -  
 E-ven in the de - sert, first fruits free - ly gi - ven; grace a - bounds and

Pno.

6  
 which we nour - ish. Give us dail - y man - na, God of end - less  
 yond all mea - sure. Sa - tan off - ers ex - cess; pow'r, con - trol, se -  
 sins for - gi - ven. Washed in God's a - bund - ance, we are dar - ing

Pno.

11  
 gra - ces; show your light u - pon our fa - ces. Here we see  
 duc - tion; we will fol - low God's in - struc - tion. By God's will,  
 dream - ers on the path of our re - deem - er. Truth is told,

Pno.

16  
 your de - cree and its in - vi - ta - tion: love as our found a - tion.  
 cups are filled, mer - cy finds the strang - er, saves the lost from dan - ger.  
 grace un - folds, the love pro - tects our neigh - bor, just - ice is our la - bor.