

Our Lenten Journey Begins...

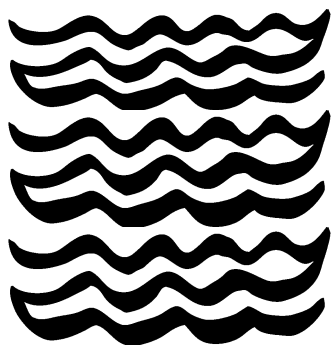
Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021

12:00 and 7:00 PM



EARTH



WATER



WIND



FLAME

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Waterbury

Genesis Gospel Café, Bridgeport

Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport

A Service of Earth, Water, Wind and Flame as our Lenten Journey begins

Gathering

GATHERING SONG (*prior to 7:00 pm livestreaming*)

(*Marjo Anderson*)

Beauty for Brokenness / God of the Poor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kVHKuldZyw>

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

(*Jeanette Harris*)

Each year, 40 days before Easter, on a Wednesday. we begin our journey through death to life.

Traditionally on Ash Wednesday we have paused to remember our own mortality.

This year we need no such reminder.

The pandemic has made us more aware than ever before how fragile our lives are, and also how precious.

While we are dust, we know in our hearts that we are also more than dust, for God has breathed life into us.

And so today we begin by praising the One who created us,

grateful for God's grace and mercy, and for the opportunity we have to bring light, life and joy to the world.

Welcome to God's house – a place where love, grace, mercy, peace and joy overflow!

PSALM OF PRAISE: Psalm 103:1-6, 8-14

(*12:00-Bill Winter; 7:00-Kristen Benoit*)

- ¹ Praise the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise God's holy name!
- ² Praise the LORD, O my soul, and remember all God's kindnesses –
- ³ the One who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ the One who ransoms your life from the Pit and crowns you with love and tenderness,
- ⁵ the One who satisfies your desires with good things and gives you an eagle's youthful energy.
- ⁶ You love justice, God, and you always on the side of the oppressed....
- ⁸ You are tender and compassionate, God, slow to anger, and always loving.
- ⁹ You will not always accuse and your anger lasts only for a short time.
- ¹⁰ You never treat us as our sins deserve or repay us in kind for the injustices we do.
- ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is your love for those who revere you.
- ¹² As far as the east is from the west, that's how far you remove our sins from us!
- ¹³ As tenderly as parents treat their children, that's how tenderly you treat your worshipers, God!
- ¹⁴ For you know what we are made of – you remember that we're nothing but dust.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

(*Jeanette Harris*)

Psalm 100 invites us to enter God's gates with thanksgiving and into God's courts with praise!

It invites us to be thankful and to bless God's holy name!

So, let us pray....

LITANY OF PRAISE

(Jeanette Harris & Marjo Anderson)

- Earth – Dusty planet, temporary dwelling place
Providing sustenance for plants, animals and the human race
For Earth, we give you thanks and praise!
- Water – Cleansing, refreshing, sustaining flow
From mountains high to valleys low
For Water, we give you thanks and praise!
- Wind -- Blowing to and from North, South, East and West
Breath of life, breath of wonder, breath of peace and rest
For Wind, we give you thanks and praise!
- Flame - Purifying agent, source of heat and light
Holy Spirit symbol, fire of love and fire of might
For Flame, we give you thanks and praise!

READING

Earth, Water, Wind, and Flame (a beginning & a middle)

(Marjo Anderson)

*After God created the heavens and the earth, and filled the earth with life,
that great almighty God knelt down, scooped up some earth, added a bit of water,
and fashioned it into an earth creature unlike any other.
And into it God breathed wind and that sculpted piece of earth and water
became a living, breathing, singing, dancing bit of divine dust.
But that divine dust wanted to leave its dust behind and be simply divine.
“No, my child, you cannot leave your dust behind.
You will take your earthy/watery/windy self out into a life filled with fiery trials....”*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Joel 2:12-13a

(12:00-Bill Winter; 7:00-Keith Weston)

- ¹² “Even now”, declares God, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.
¹³ Tear open your heart – not your garments.
Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love....”

HYMN

How Firm a Foundation

(Kristen Benoit)

- 1 How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in Christ Jesus, the Word!
What more can he say than to you he has said who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?**
- 2 "Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed, for I am your God and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand, upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."**
- 3 "When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie, my grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply.
The flames shall not hurt you; I only design your dross to consume and your gold to refine."**
- 4 "Throughout all their lifetime my people shall prove my sov'reign, eternal, unchangeable love;
& then, when gray hairs shall their temples adorn, like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne."**

*Text: based on Isaiah 40:11, 41:10, 43:2, 46:4, Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 6:46-49, 2 Timothy 2:19,
by J. Rippon, A Selection of Hymns, 1787, alt.; Meter 11 11 11 11*

Music: FOUNDATION, Early American

This hymn is in the Public Domain.

CONFESSION

Psalm 51:1-9

(12:00-Marjo Anderson & Carol Weaver;
7:00 Eileen Anderson & Sharon Samoska)

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God!
Because of your love and your great compassion, wipe away my faults;
- ² wash me clean of my guilt;
purify me of my sin.
- ³ For I am aware of my faults,
and have my sin constantly in mind.
- ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.
- ⁵ I was born in sin,
conceived in sin —
- ⁶ Yet you have always desired faithfulness
and wanted truth to live in my innermost being.
- ⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop until I am clean;
wash me until I am purer than new-fallen snow.
- ⁸ Instill in me joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice again.
- ⁹ Turn your face from my sins
and wipe away all my guilt.

LAMENT

SIN & UNBELIEF

CRIMES & VIOLENCE

BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

SICKNESS & MEDICAL DISPARITY

FINANCIAL DISTRESS & UNEMPLOYMENT

ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, SUBSTANCE ABUSE & OTHER MENTAL ILLNESSES

LACK OF FOOD & SHELTER & OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE

NATURAL DISASTERS & ACCIDENTS

INJUSTICE & SOCIAL UNREST

RACISM & OPPRESSION

CONFLICT & WAR

DEATH & GRIEF

SILENCE (ending with the ringing of the bell)

REPENTANCE

Psalm 51:10-17

(12:00-Jeanette Harris & Bill Winter;
7:00 Sandra Brown & Linda Nido)

- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and uphold me with your freeing Spirit.
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Save me from bloodshed, O God, God of my salvation —
and my tongue will sing of your justice.
- ¹⁵ Open my lips, O Lord,
and my mouth will sing forth your praise.
- ¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice
nor do you take pleasure in burnt offerings.
- ¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

FORGIVENESS

Isaiah 61:1-8

(12:00-Carol Weaver; 7:00-Lynnette Lawson)

- ¹ The Spirit of the Exalted One is upon me, because God anointed me:
God has sent me to proclaim good news to those who are poor;
to heal broken hearts,
to proclaim release to those held captive and liberation to those in prison;
- ² to announce a year of favor from God, and the day of God's vindication;
to comfort all who mourn,
- ³ to provide for those who grieve in Zion — to give them a wreath of flowers instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of tears, a cloak of praise instead of despair.
- ⁴ They will be called oaks of justice, planted by God to display the divine splendor.

READING

Earth, Water, Wind, and Flame
(a middle & an end)

(Marjo Anderson)

*...That sculpted piece of earth and water
became a living, breathing, singing, dancing bit of divine dust.
But that divine dust wanted to leave its dust behind and be simply divine.
"No, my child, you cannot leave your dust behind.
You will take your earthy/watery/windy self out into a life filled with fiery trials.
It won't be easy, but if you trust in me, I will use that fire
to transform your dust into a precious diamond that will reflect my light.
You will always be dust,
but you can be dust
that sparkles."*

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

(12:00-Carol Weaver; 7:00-Jeanette Harris)

Worshippers are encouraged to have a bowl of water nearby.

A candle may be lighted and placed near the water if desired.

Worshippers may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the leader begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
the rock of Earth who gave us birth,
the fountain of living Water,
the Flame which is our light and our salvation,
all swirling around together in a divine Wind. **Amen**

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death,
so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
(Romans 6:3-4)

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters
and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.
We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, & above all we praise you for the saving water of baptism!
Wash away the sin within us, and drown the evil around us.
Satisfy all our thirst with your living water, Jesus Christ, our Savior,
Breathe your Spirit into all who are gathered here and into all creation.
Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.
To you be given honor & praise through Jesus Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now & forever. **Amen**

Almighty God, who gives us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit
and forgives us all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness
and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

HYMN

We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus

(Kristen Benoit)

**We are baptized in Christ Jesus, we are baptized in his death;
that as Christ is raised victorious, we might live a brand new life.
And if we have been united in a dreadful death like his,
we will all be reunited, for he lives.**

**In the water and the witness, in the breaking of the bread,
in the waiting arms of Jesus who is risen from the dead,
God has made a new beginning from the ashes of our past;
in the losing and the winning we hold fast.**

**Glory be to God the Father, glory be to Christ the Son,
glory to the Holy Spirit, ever three and ever one;
as it was in the beginning, glory now resounds again
in a song that has no ending. Amen**

Text: Romans 6:1-11; by John C. Ylvisaker, b. 1937; Meter 8 7 8 7 8 7 11

Music: OUIMETTE by John C. Ylvisaker

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COMMUNION

(Marjo Anderson)

God be with you!
And also with you!

Open your hearts!
We open them to God and one another!

Let us give thanks to the God of all!
It is right to give God thanks and praise!

In the night in which he was betrayed...

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let these gifts to us be blessed.
Blessed be God, who is our Bread; may all the world be clothed and fed. Amen

The body of Christ given for you. The blood of Christ shed for you.

The body & blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you & keep you in divine grace! **Amen!**

DISMISSAL

(Jeanette Harris)

As we leave this gathering, we prepare to enter each day leading up to the acknowledgement of every aspect of our Lord's birth, suffering, death and ultimate resurrection, we embrace each day with hope – hope that our every action, our every word, our every response will be one that would reflect the love of Christ. If hope is needed, we will share it,
if words of encouragement are needed, we will give it,
if prayer is needed, we will offer it,
if love is needed, we will guide them to the one who loves them the most, Jesus Christ.

SENDING SONG *(after livestreaming ends)*

(Marjo Anderson)

Our God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01Yj7H-eSjM>



Midweek Lenten Adventures in Prayer

TWO DAYS/TIMES

WED 7:30 PM

THU 10:30 AM

Week 1 (Feb 24/25) - The **Y** is for WHY Pray?

Week 2 (March 3/4) - The **P** is for PAUSE!

Week 3 (Mar 10/11) - The **R** is for REJOICE!

Week 4 (Mar 17/18) - The **A** is for ASK!

Week 5 (Mar 24/25) - The **Y** is for YIELD!

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Θοιν Zoom Μεσινγ

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89939840751?pwd=amlvTnJIU1c5MWlIOFozcUtTVnJuQT09>