

Welcome to

# **First Mennonite Church**

*Denver, CO*



***Ash Wednesday***

***February 17, 2021***

*That you may know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,  
so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

# Entering Worship

The Peace of the Lord be with you!

## Words of Welcome

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession. Acknowledging that we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory, we repent and return to our loving creator. Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance, sorrow, and sacrifice.

During the season of Lent, medieval Christians prepared themselves - through prayer, repentance, and reflection for baptism on Easter Day or as a way to renew their baptismal vows. The invitation for us today to engage in these practices is still extended.

Lent is a *quieter* season than most other times of the year—it calls us to personal reflection rather than to outward celebration. For some, Lent is also a time of fasting, as they remember Jesus' time in the wilderness.

Welcome to this time of worship, confession, and reflection.

## Invitation from Scripture

### Joel 2:12

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.

### Matthew 11:28

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

## Call to Worship

Come people of God, return to the One who gives you life.

**We come, longing for a closer walk with our Creator.**

This is a time to return to God with all our hearts.

**We repent of those things which we have done that we should not have done and those things we have left undone which we should have done.**

We affirm that God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love.

**We come with joy, expecting to be renewed, eager to be a channel of God's blessing. We trust that God will equip us to reach out in love to others.**

***What Does the Lord Require of You?***

Voices Together 207

*Line 1* What does the Lord require of you?  
What does the Lord require of you?

*Line 2* Justice, kindness,  
Walk humbly with your God.

*Line 3* To seek justice and love kindness  
And walk humbly with your God.

**Prayer**

Creator and Creating God,

We give you thanks for you receive us as we are: troubled, conflicted,  
wounded, brokenhearted.

You embrace and accept us, loving us unconditionally.

Today we turn toward you. Wash away our Guilt and cleanse us from sin.

Open our hearts to you, walk with us this Lenten Season.

Amen

**Invocation**

**We Remember**

**Exodus 13:3-9**

Moses said to the people, "Remember this day on which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, because the Lord brought you out from there by strength of hand; no leavened bread shall be eaten.

It shall serve for you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, so that the teaching of the Lord may be on your lips; for with a strong hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt.

### **Deuteronomy 8:2-6**

Remember the long way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments. He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. The clothes on your back did not wear out and your feet did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the Lord your God disciplines you. Therefore keep the commandments of the Lord your God, by walking in his ways and by fearing him.

### **Psalms 25:6-7**

Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love,  
For they have been from of old  
Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
According to your steadfast love remember me,  
For your goodness' sake, O Lord!

## **We Repent**

### **Joel 2:12-13**

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.

### **Psalms 51:1-7**

Have mercy on me, O God,  
According to your steadfast love;  
According to your abundant mercy  
Blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
And cleanse me from my sin.  
For I know my transgressions,  
And my sin is ever before me.  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
And done what is evil in your sight,  
So that you are justified in your sentence  
And blameless when you pass judgment.  
Indeed, I was born guilty,  
A sinner when my mother conceived me.  
You desire truth in the inward being;  
Therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.  
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

### **Psalms 51:10-15**

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And put a new and right spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence,  
And do not take your holy spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
And sustain in me a willing spirit.  
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
And sinners will return to you.  
Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,  
O God of my salvation,  
And my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.  
O Lord, open my lips,  
And my mouth will declare your praise.

# **We Can Be Renewed**

## **Isaiah 43:18-21**

Do not remember the former things,  
Or consider the things of old.  
I am about to do a new thing;  
Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
And rivers in the desert.  
The wild animals will honor me,  
The jackals and the ostriches;  
For I give water in the wilderness,  
Rivers in the desert,  
To give drink to my chosen people,  
The people whom I formed for myself  
So that they might declare my praise.

## **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## **Revelation 21:5-7**

And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

*Refrain (English)*

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.  
Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.

*Refrain (Spanish)*

Tengo sed de ti, oh fuente del amor.  
Tengo sed de ti: tu amor es libertad.

**Ashes of Forgiveness and Purification**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

the early Christians observed with great devotion  
the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection,  
and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration  
there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism.  
It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins  
and had separated themselves from the community of faith  
were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness,  
and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way the whole congregation was reminded  
of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ  
and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church,  
to observe a holy Lent:  
by self-examination and repentance;  
by prayer, fasting, and self-denial;  
and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

To make a right beginning of repentance,  
and as a mark of our mortal nature,  
let us now kneel before our Creator and Redeemer.

## **Prayer of Confession**

God of love and mercy

We come to you, seeking a change in our hearts and minds.

We confess that we carry the baggage of idols, bitterness, and self-concern, even while we attempt to follow Christ.

Cleanse us from our attachment to these old things.

Burn away their power in us and purify our hearts.

In Christ's name.

Amen.

## **Sharing Peace**

### **Prayer Over Ashes**

God of Mercy,

You have created us out of the dust of the earth.

May these ashes be for us

a sign of our mortality and penitence,

as we seek to do your will

on earth as it is in heaven,

through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

## **Imposition of Ashes**

### ***O Lord, Hear My Prayer***

VT 685

O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer.

When I call, answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer.

Come and listen to me.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Benediction**

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

Let the memory of your incomplete humanity

awaken you to the wonders, joys, sorrows, and pain of life.

Let the ashes you wear be the ashes of transformation;



of awakening to the beauty and love of seizing the moment  
and living it to the fullest.

Let it be said of you that here in this little part of eternity  
that you lived fully, loved extravagantly  
and helped humanity evolve into all that God dreamed we can be!

You are fearfully and wonderfully made

In the image of the ONE who is was and ever more shall be  
Creator, Christ and Spirit ONE, **Amen.**

# Music acknowledgements and copyright

## *What Does the Lord Require of You?*

Text: based on Micah 6:8; Jim Strathdee

Music: Jim Strathdee

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## *Bless the Lord, My Soul*

Text: based on Psalm 103:1, Taizé Community

Music: Jacques Berthier

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## *O Lord, Hear My Prayer*

Text: based on Psalm 102:1-2; *Music from Taizé*, vol. 2, 1982

Music: Jacques Berthier

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## **Leadership for this Service**

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**Sanctuary Arts:** Paul Johnson

**Video Editing:** Claudia Aguilar

*Thanks to all who generously shared their attention and talents to make this service a time of encouragement and challenge in our walk of faith.*

## **Giving**

**Checks:** Write a check to FMC and mail to 430 W 9<sup>th</sup> Ave, Denver CO 80204.

**Online:** Go to [www.fmcdenver.org/giving](http://www.fmcdenver.org/giving). You can make a one-time contribution or set up a recurring contribution by credit/debit card or through a direct withdrawal from your checking account.

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