Westminster Presbyterian Church

March 2, 2022
ASH WEDNESDAY

Welcome and Announcements **Reverend David Rice**

Prelude "Cantilena", from Sonata for Flute and Piano FRANCIS POULENC

Let us open our hearts and minds to the rhythm of the gathering music as it centers us in God's presence for worship.

***Gathering Words** **Dr. Divine Gbagbo**
*The * in the liturgy indicates that you are invited to stand in body or in spirit.*

"Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart." (Joel 2:12)
Roll up your sleeves.
Let down your guard.
Come in from the storm.
Make yourself at home.
Pull up to the table.
Release the tension in your jaw.
Take a deep breath.
Return to God
with all your heart.
May it be so.

***Opening Prayer** "On My Way"

You said return to me
so here I am
skin and bones held
together
with memories and a little
bit of
duct tape. I am bringing
the worst of me,
consider yourself warned—
the furrowed brow,
the achy back,
the slew of judgments,
a pocket full of
assumptions,
the track of negativity
that runs
laps in my head.

I am bringing it all
because you said
return to me,
edits not required,
so return I will.
And not all of it will be bad.
Some of it will be lovely.
I will bring
a wagon full of nostalgia,
a melody that won't
let me go,
a million stories that start
with the words,
"Oh it was beautiful!"
I will bring a mended heart,
a glass half-full,
two lungs, out of breath

from dancing too long,
and dreams that taste
like honey.
I will bring my whole
messy
human self
because I know,
I just *know*,
deep in my bones,
that you are already
running to meet me.
There are no cuts on
this team.
You said you'd take it all,
so here I come.
Me and all my humanity.
We are on my way.

***Opening Hymn No. 722** "Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak" CANOBURY
Verses 1 and 4

Prayer of Illumination **Carol Gates**

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.
We are at the edge of our seats.
We are listening for you.
Amen.

Scripture Reading **Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21**

6 "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. **2** "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. **3** But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that
your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5 "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. **6** 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.

16 "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. **17** But when you fast, put oil on
your head and wash your face, **18** 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.

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

Time for Silent Reflection

Musical Reflection "Create in Me a Clean Heart" **First Presbyterian Church's College of Wooster Choral Scholars: Emily Hasecke, Basil Rutkowski, Anya Smith, Paul Zito**

Call to Confession **Dr. Divine Gbagbo**

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. Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness **Dr. Divine Gbagbo**

Holy God, I confess: I don't return to you fully.
I share with you the pieces of my life that are convenient.
I put on different hats in different rooms.
I forget that I am called, invited, and loved with all that I am—
including my mess, my beauty, my faith, and my doubt.
Forgive me, and give me a heart that longs to return.

Friend, 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.

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.

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.

Imposition of the Ashes Words from Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt **Erin Guzmán and Reverend David Rice**

Affirmation of Faith **Carol Gates**

We believe in an expansive love that healed the sick,
welcomed the children, and saw this world as it could be.
We believe that that expansive love runs over the edges of our lives,
smoothing our rough places, and pulling us home.
We call that expansive love Yaweh and Mother God, Jesus and Divine Creator.
Thanks be to God for a Love like that. Amen.

Hymn No. No. 525 "Let Us Break Bread Together" LET US BREAK BREAD

Communion Invitation to the Table **Erin Guzmán**

Jesus has always been one to invite.
He said, "Drop your nets and follow me."
He said, "Let the little children come."
He said, "Stand up from your mat, you are healed."
Jesus has always been one to invite, and that has not changed.
So friends, you are invited to this Table. Each and every one of us—with our doubts, our fears, our scars, our joy, our dreams, our hopes, our questions—we are invited to God's table.
And here we will be met. Here we will be fed. Here we are given a taste of an expansive life that is full to the brim with love, overflowing with joy.
So come.
Not because you must, but because you can.
Come. You are invited. This Table is for you.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving **Erin Guzmán**

God who knows us, we are amazed by you.
Your love never runs out, your hope never runs dry, your joy never gives up.
We wish that we could be more like you in that way.
In a world that loves scarcity, your abundance is shocking.
In a world that knows fear, your joy is compelling.
In a world that knows anxiety, your peace is captivating.
We long for these things.
So today we ask you—be with us on the hamster wheel.
Be with us when compassion fatigue rears her head.
Be with us when stress makes it hard to breathe.
Be with us when self-doubt pushes in close.
Be with us when exhaustion becomes constant or when loneliness becomes our primary language.
Be with us, and show us the way to the life you long for us.
Show us a life of expansive faith.
Show us a life of overflowing joy.
Show us a life of absorbing beauty.
Show us a life of engrossing purpose.
Show us a life that is as honest, and rich, and meaningful as the one Jesus led.
And until that expansive and holy day, we will continue to gather at this Table.
Until that day we will continue to look for you in our midst.
So pour out a double portion of yourself onto this bread and cup so that we might catch a glimpse of your goodness.

God, we are amazed by you.
Your love never runs out, so bring that never-ending love here.
Together we pray:

Our God in heaven, holy is your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done, on earth as is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours.
Now and forever. Amen.

Communion Distribution **Reverend David Rice and Erin Guzmán**

*** Closing Hymn No. 619** "Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven" LAUDA ANIMA
Verses 1 and 3

***Benediction** **Reverend David Rice**

Postlude Chorale Prelude on "O Welt, ich muss dich lassen" JOHANNES BRAHMS

The service continues with fellowship.

To assure the safety of all, currently we are not passing the offering plates. They are in the back of the sanctuary. We invite you to place your gifts there. Thank you for your generosity.

Note: Opening Prayer - Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org
Gathering Words - From *A Sanctified Art*'s Full to the Brim Lenten resources series

Music: Piano Divine Gbagbo
Flute Karolyn Rice
Organ Ken Shafer

Tech. Assistant/Event Steward Tony Mendiola

Erin Guzmán

serves as the
Henry J. Copeland Interfaith Chaplain and Director of Religious & Spiritual Life
at the College of Wooster.

She is a member of First Presbyterian Church in Wooster
and will be ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament
in the PC(USA) later this Spring.

First Presbyterian Church

is a Christian community dedicated to showing God's love
through worship, study, social justice, outreach, and fellowship.

More Light Church and Member of Covenant Network
Earth Care Congregation and Matthew 25 Church

The Mission of the Matthew 25 Church: Matthew 25:31–46 calls us to actively engage the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. We commit ourselves to congregational vitality by acting boldly and compassionately to end systemic poverty and structural racism, serving people who are oppressed, imprisoned, poor.

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Westminster Presbyterian Church

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www.facebook.com/wpcwooster / www.instagram.com/wpc_wooster/
Westminster Presbyterian Church strives to be a safe place for all people to worship regardless of ethnicity, creed, age, cultural background, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Verses 1 and 4

DISCIPLESHIP AND MISSION

722 Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak



Two great truths inform this text: first, that the testimony of experience is powerful and persuasive; and second, that no one should venture to minister on one's own strength rather than God's. The tune reflects a 19th-century practice of adapting piano pieces as hymn tunes.

TEXT: Frances Ridley Havergal, 1872, alt.
MUSIC: Robert Schumann, 1839, alt.

CANONBURY
LM

Let Us Break Bread Together 525



This African American spiritual quite possibly reflects the circumstances of slaves attending early morning communion services in colonial Anglican churches, but its combination of hope ("rising sun") and supplication ("Lord, have mercy") speaks to many worshipers' experience.

TEXT: African American spiritual
MUSIC: African American spiritual; arr. Melva Wilson Costen, 1988
Music Arr. © 1990 Melva Wilson Costen

LET US BREAK BREAD
10.10 with refrain

Verses 1 and 3

ADORATION

Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven 619

(Psalm 103)



This adaptation of an older paraphrase of Psalm 103 (see no. 620) is informed by an awareness that much of the received language of religious traditions enshrines social values that obscure the goodness of God, which far transcends all our labels and categories and hierarchies.

TEXT: Henry Francis Lyte, 1834; adapt. Ecumenical Women's Center, 1974
MUSIC: John Goss, 1869
Text Adapt. © 1974 Ecumenical Women's Center

LAUDA ANIMA
8.7.8.7.8.7