

Church of the Covenant

Boston Massachusetts



Ash Wednesday
February 17, 6:30pm

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87499175855?pwd=MXdFS0pKUXJLeHpPczBKYmRKU3BvUT09>

“Beloved, remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”



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Welcome. Thank you for joining us on this sacred night. Please settle in as the contemplative music is playing, we will get started a few minutes after 6:30pm.

Allow the music to guide you in meditative prayer and silent settling.

And remember to breathe.

In tonight's service, we will celebrate communion, so please locate something to put in a cup, and something to put on a plate to celebrate later.

Also in our service, we will engage in an old ritual of the imposition of ashes. Here are some ideas of gathering some sacred dust/soil/ashes equivalent:

- Find a little soil (sacred dirt) from a house plant (if not immunocompromised/allergic), and mix it with a little water/cooking oil in a dish
- Make some ash from matches or a candle wick, and mix with a little olive/cooking oil in a dish.
- Carefully burn a small piece of paper in some aluminum foil, then when cool, add 1 drop of oil
- Ground up black eye shadow...
- Rumor has it burnt wine corks leave a good smudge...
- Air – if none of the above feels doable, simply use your finger to trace the sign of the cross on your forehead when invited, remembering together.

*When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.*

*³⁰ When you send forth your spirit,^[a] they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.*

But if you turn away from them, they panic. When you take away their breath, they die and turn again to dust. When you give them your breath, life is created, and you renew the face of the earth. –

Psalm 104:29-30

Contemplative Taizé Music

Opening Welcome

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

Lighting the Christ Light

Opening Hymn (PH, 316):

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

1. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.
2. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until with Thee I will one will,
To do and to endure.
3. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine.
4. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with Thee the perfect life
Of Thine eternity.

Call to Worship

One: God of Grace, you called us forth from the dust of the earth;
you claimed us for Christ in the waters of baptism.

Many: **Look upon us as we enter these forty days bearing the mark of
ashes, and bless our journey through the valley of Lent to the
font of rebirth.**

One: May our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace;
our prayer, the chant of humble and grateful hearts.

Many: **All that we do and pray is in the name of Jesus, through whom
you proclaim your fierce love forever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn: *Sunday's Palms are Wednesday's Ashes*

Tune: Beach Spring

Sunday's palms are Wednesday's ashes as another Lent begins;
thus we kneel before our Maker in contrition for our sins.
We have marred baptismal pledges, in rebellion gone astray;
now returning seek forgiveness; grant us pardon God this day

We have failed to love our neighbors their offences to forgive,
have not listened to their troubles, nor have cared just how they live.
we are jealous, proud, impatient, loving over-much our things;
may the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.

We are hasty to judge others, blind to proof of human need;
and our lack of understanding demonstrates our inner greed;
we have wasted earth's resources; want and suffering we've ignored;
come and cleanse us, then restore us; make new hearts within us God

~Rae B. Whitney (1991)

A Confessional Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

**O God, help us to use this season of Lent
to examine our attachments,
and to sense where You invite us into truth,
to live more simply and deeply.**

**Shine the light of Your love
into the private corners of our lives
where we have acquired so much clutter
that it has begun to restrict our freedom.**

**Grant us the strength to free ourselves
from appetites and needs that drive us
into taking, having and wanting
more than we need or have time for.**

**Teach us that in letting go
we become free, rather than deprived,
generous rather than covetous,
and spacious rather than restricted.**

As we breathe, we offer You our Lenten observance,
and today we place our feet
on the road to Easter, and walk
the Way that You have walked before us. Amen.

Readings from Scripture:

A Fast for Justice: A Sanctified Art Video: Joel 2 and Isaiah 58

Responsive Reading of Psalm 51 (The Voice Translation)

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God;

Many: Restore within me a sense of being brand new.

Look on me with a heart of mercy, O God,
according to Your generous love.

According to Your great compassion,
wipe out *every consequence of my shameful crimes.*

Thoroughly wash me, *inside and out*, of all my crooked deeds.

Cleanse me from my sins – personal, structural, known, and unknown.

For I am *fully* aware of all I have done wrong,
and my guilt is there, staring me in the face.

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God;

Many: Restore within me a sense of being brand new.

It was against You, only You, that I sinned,

for I have done what You say is wrong, right before Your eyes.

So when You speak, You are in the right.

When You judge, Your judgments are authentic and true.

For I was complicit from the day I was born,

impacted and implicated from the time my mother first carried me
from within.

But still, You long *to enthrone* truth throughout my being;

in unseen places deep within me, You show me wisdom.

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God;

Many: Restore within me a sense of being brand new.

Cleanse me *of my duplicity* with hyssop, and I will be clean.

If You wash me, I will be cleaner than freshly fallen snow.

Help me hear joy and happiness *as my accompaniment*,

so my bones, which have been broken, will *dance in* delight instead.

Cover Your face so You will not see my brokenness,
and erase my guilt *from the record*.

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God;

Many: Restore within me a sense of being brand new.

Create in me a clean heart, O God;
restore within me a sense of being brand new.

Do not cast me far away from Your presence,
and do not remove Your Holy Spirit from me.

Give back to me the *deep* delight of being liberated by You;
let Your willing Spirit sustain me.

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God;

Many: Restore within me a sense of being brand new.

If You do, I promise to teach others Your ways
and help deniers find their way back to You.

Free me from the guilt *of taking life*, of shedding blood,
O God who saves me.

Now my tongue, *which was used to destroy*, will be used to sing with deep
delight of how right *and just* You are.

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God;

Many: Restore within me a sense of being brand new.

O Eternal One, *pry* open my lips
that this mouth will sing *joyfully* of Your greatness.

I would surrender *my dearest possessions or destroy all that I prize to prove my regret*,

but You don't take pleasure in sacrifices or burnt offerings.

What sacrifice I can offer You is my broken spirit
because a broken spirit, O God,

a heart that honestly regrets the past,

You won't detest.

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God;

Many: Restore within me a sense of being brand new.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (Reading from the Roots translation)

“Careful: do not display righteousness in front of people, to be seen! If you do, you have no compensation from your Creator who is in heaven. When you give charity, do not trumpet your generosity, as the pretentious

do in the congregations and in the streets, to be glorified by people. Trust me, I tell you: they already *have* their compensation! You, though, when you give charity, your left hand should not even know what your right hand does, so the charity you do is in secret, and your Creator who sees in secret will make it up to you. And whenever you pray, you shall not be as the pretentious, because they delight to stand up in prayer in congregations and on street corners, to flaunt themselves. Trust me, I tell you: they already *have* their compensation! But when you pray, enter into your most private room, shut your door, and pray to your Creator who is in secret, and your Creator who sees in secret will treasure you.

“When you fast, do not be morose like the pretentious, who put on an expression to parade their fasting. Trust me, I tell you: they already *have* their compensation! But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that your fasting is not apparent to people, but only to your Creator who is in secret, and your Creator who sees in secret will treasure you. Do not store up valuables on earth, where moth and decay ruin them, and where thieves break in and steal. Instead, store up valuables in heaven, where neither moth nor decay ruin, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Where your treasure is, there will be your heart.”

One: God is still speaking. This is the word of God,
Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Breathe: Collective Silence

Meditation

Prayer and Invitation to a Holy Lent

*Let us contemplate more deeply, seek reconciliation more intentionally,
and pursue justice more passionately.*

The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of Jesus' passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting.

We invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. (Book of Common Prayer, p 264)

*The Imposition of Ashes

At this time, you are invited to engage in a sacred ritual to remind yourself of your mortality, and your beloved nature. You may wish to do so by making the form of the cross on your forehead or outside of your hand according to tradition. While singing along with the Taizé chant, you are invited to impose whatever ash-like reminder you have now on yourself and or someone you are with. If you don't have any ash-like substance, you are invited to use your finger and trace the sign of the cross on your forehead or hand.



*Remember
that you are
dust and into
dust you shall
return.*

Jesus, remember me

The musical score is written for two voices (Soprano and Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in 3/4 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 69. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "Je-sus, re-member me when you come in - to your king - dom." The score consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line.

Holy Communion The Invitation

The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you!

All: And also with you.

One: Beloved Dust, let us lift up our hearts!

All: We open our hearts to the Spirit who fills us with hope.

One: Let us give thanks to God our light.

All: It is right for us to offer our thanks and praise to God.

One: It is right for us to thank and praise you God...

Many: Holy, holy, holy One, God of wondrous works.

All creation is full of your love and grace. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of peace. Hosanna in the highest!

And we continue to pray, praying together as Jesus taught us, let us pray:

The Prayer of Jesus (New Zealand Prayer Book) (in unison)
Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Mother and Father of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread & Sharing of the Cup

Post Communion Prayer

Sending Hymn: *Day Is Done*

Tune: AR HYD Y NOS

1. Day is done, but love unfailing dwells ever here;
Shadows fall, but hope, prevailing, calms every fear.
God our Maker, none forsaking,
Take our hearts, of Love's own making,
Watch our sleeping, guard our waking, be always near.

2. Dark descends, but light unending, shines through our night;
You are with us, ever lending new strength to sight:
One in love, your truth confessing,
One in hope of heaven's blessing,
May we see, in love's possessing, Love's endless light!

3. Eyes will close, but you unsleeping, watch by our side;
Death may come, in love's safekeeping, still we abide
God of love, all evil quelling,
Sin forgiving, fear dispelling,
Stay with us, our hearts indwelling, This eventide.

~James Quinn (b. 1919)

Closing Litany

The End is God's. The Beginning is God's.

The Storm is God's. The Peace is God's.

The Depths are God's. The Heights are God's

The Shadow is God's. The Light is God's.

For all times, all things and all, all belong to God.

Travel with God to the end from the beginning.

Walk slowly with the God of your salvation.

Continue with God during the storm as well as the peace.

Walk surely with the God of your liberation.

Journey with God through the depths and the heights.

Walk fully with the God of your restoration.

Wait with God in the dark and the light.

Walk always with the God of your assurance;

For all times, all things and all, all belong to God.

Amen.

*Benediction

*Passing of the Peace

Church of the Covenant: www.cotcbos.org

Worship Participants:

Liturgists – Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Joshua Lazard

Lector – Anita Gram

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Cantors – Rev. Tom Reid, Rev. Adam Isbitsky, Austin Burns, Covenant Choir

Cover Art: “Invited In” by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, © A Sanctified Art |

sanctifiedart.org, Inspired by Matthew 6:1-21

Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on paper

A note from the artist: “Again and again, we are invited inward. The common thread here is the focus on expressing love for God in secret, not for the recognition of others, but as an outpouring of devotion for God alone. I think the references to spiritual disciplines are less about the particular acts themselves and more about the intention fueling the action. The intention affects the quality of the action itself. Does your outward action align with what’s going on inside of you?”

There are times when I've been with friends and I've felt this tug to document the event and share it on social media. This impulse yanks me out of the present moment, away from my friends, and I find myself focused on how the event might be perceived by others. Ultimately, it's as though the moment isn't actually happening. I'm not present in mind, body, or spirit; I am elsewhere, fixated on my phone. Have you heard this before: "If you didn't post it, did it even happen?" I think that is a great question to consider. Are we so caught up in the amplification of our actions and how they are widely perceived, that the actions themselves are void? If we are more concerned with how our public prayers and acts of allyship are received, are we actually praying? Are we actually being an ally? God invites us into thorough self-examination and authentic relationship. In this image, a person kneels with arms extended, basking in the glow of God's all-encompassing love. It is in the true pursuit of God, this intimate, inward turning, that God sees you. It is in our full, embodied intentionality that we find deep connection with God and ourselves.

This is the reward."

LENT 2021: February 17-April 4 **"Breathe"**

Lent is a season of spiritual vitality and renewal. It is a time to move past some of life's daily distractions and difficulties to draw near to the sacred. It is a gift of 40 days to seek the Holy Spirit's presence with more intentionality and creativity as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Through the journey of these days – through silence, reflection, contemplation, listening, questioning, singing – through giving up or taking on – it is our prayer that your mind, body, and spirit would find restoration, revitalization, and renewal in the foundational love of God.

Our theme this year for the season of Lent is "Breathe." In this world where too many still cannot find a breath, we all need to strive together to breathe more deeply, more regularly, more generously. We need to do so physically, spiritually, and with the justice of Jesus in our lungs and actions. Join us starting on Ash Wednesday, February 17, through Easter, for this important and timely spiritual journey. At the beginning of each worship service Sunday morning, we will spend a little sacred time learning how to breathe better. Each Wednesday evening from 6-6:30pm, we will hold some sacred space together to share, sing and pray for our Lenten Evening Prayers.

LENT DEVOTIONALS: Lent begins Feb. 17 with our Ash Wednesday service on Zoom at 6:30pm. In preparation for this season, our Worship and Music committee is providing you all with a free PDF copy of A Sanctified Art daily Lenten devotional: download [here](#). In addition, for those who prefer booklets to hold, here are some we recommend (please let Rob know if you have any financial limitations and we will purchase a copy for you):

Were You There

Wild Hope - Stories for Lent from the Vanishing

Lent in Plain Sight

Lent of Liberation: Confronting the legacy of American slavery

Wherever you are in your journey through faith and life, we invite you to journey with us this Lent on Sundays, Wednesdays and every day as we seek the deeper truths of life, God and ourselves. Come, journey with us!



Church of the Covenant
Boston Massachusetts

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Rob Mark, *Lead Pastor*

Rev. Joshua Lazard, *Associate Pastor*

Thomas Handel, *Minister of Music*

Bill Brown, *Building Manager*

Rev. Kate Carlisle, *CYCE Coordinator / Parish Administrator*

Nancy Stockford, *Financial Secretary*

Fred Lopes, *Sunday Sexton*

Anita Goncalves, *Child Care Provider*

Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*

CHURCH OFFICERS

Liz Vizza, *President of the Corporation*

Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*

Anita Gram, *Moderator of Board of Deacons*

Faith Perry, *Treasurer*