February 22, 2023
Joint Ash Wednesday
Imposition of the Ashes
Coolspring and Westminster PC
4:30 p.m.

Prayer of Preparation

Dust and ashes touch our face, mark our failure and our falling. Holy Spirit, come, walk with us tomorrow, take us as disciples, washed and wakened by your calling. Take us by the hand and lead us, lead us through the desert sands, bring us to living water, Holy Spirit, come.

(source: Brian A Wren)

Gathering in the Presence of God
**Stand in Body or Spirit*

Gathering Music *Wait for the Lord* GTG #90
Taize Community

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

Welcome (responsively) Pastors Eddie & Charles

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And on the whole world, peace!

***Sharing of the Peace of Christ**
Please turn to your neighbor and greet each other saying: ***The Peace of Christ be with you.***

***Song of Reflection** *Sanctuary*

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary
Pure and holy, tried and true
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living
Sanctuary for You.

Prayer of Releasing (unison) Pastor Charles

Let us focus our minds and hearts on God's presence with us. I invite you to relax into a comfortable position and take a few deep breaths and in unison let us pray.

Holy, holy, holy God, *w*e place ourselves in your presence; we rest in the promise of your grace. Our minds and our spirits are cluttered with many thoughts and feelings that threaten to pull our attention away from you. Let us unclench our fists and release these things:

We release all that we have done today–whether for good or for ill.
We release all that we feel like we should have done today, but did not do.
We release all that we need to do tomorrow.
We release our fear. We release our anxiety. We release our impatience. We release our pride.
All of the thoughts, all of the feelings that pull us away from you, O God, we release. [silence]

Fill us now with the joy and the peace of your deep, abiding presence.
We offer all of ourselves to you, our One God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. Amen.

Silent Prayer & Song of Anticipation GTG #471
Pam Jusino

During the song of anticipation, you are invited to reflect on ways you have been separated from God, and neighbor, or of a burden you wish to release. You are invited to come forward and leave your worry in the canister up front where they will be burnt as a symbol of God's forgiveness and grace. The congregants join in singing.

"O Lord, Hear My Prayer," Taize Community

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.

Praying and Listening to God's Word

Hebrew Scripture Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 Pam Jusino

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near - a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains, a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

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, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. 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; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar, let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' "

Silence

Reflection Pastor Eddie

***Song of Hope** *Abide with Me (v. 1-2)* GTG #836

1 Abide with me: fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.

2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
change and decay in all around I see.
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

Imposition of the Ashes

You are invited to come forward if you wish to receive the imposition of ashes in two ways: I will place the mark of ashes on your forehead or to mark the back of your hand.

Confessing Our Separation from God *(unison)* Pastor Charles

O God of life, we confess the ways we turn away from the fullness of life that you offer. [silence]
God of love, we confess the hatred we hold in our hearts. [silence]
God of compassion, we confess our indifference. [silence]
God of justice, we confess that our lives are linked to oppressive systems. [silence]
God of peace, we confess the violent movements of our hearts, the violent realities of our world. [silence]
Holy God, we confess our sins to you. [silence]

***Song of Hope** *Abide with Me (v. 3-5)* GTG #836

3 I need thy presence every passing hour;
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

4 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

5 Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Silence

Benediction & Charge Pastors Eddie & Charles

Song of Faith *Stay with Me* GTG #204
Taize Community

Stay with me; remain here with me; watch and pray.
Watch and pray

Stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray, watch and pray.

Depart in Silence

Officiating:
Rev. Charles Gilmore, CPC
Rev. Eddie Jusino, WPC
Pam Jusino, WPC
Judy Moore, Organist
Melissa Schrock and Blue Jade, A-V Board