



Wednesday, February 14, 2024

Black Lives Matter / Welcome the Stranger, including Migrants and Refugees
Stop Hate Against Muslims, Jews, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders



Ash Wednesday

WE GATHER

“The land upon which we gather is part of the traditional territory of the Lenni–Lenape, called ‘Lenapehoking.’ The Lenape People lived in harmony with one another upon this territory for thousands of years. During the colonial era and early federal period, many were removed west and north, but some also remain among the continuing historical tribal communities of the region: The Nanticoke Lenni–Lenape Tribal Nation; the Ramapough Lenape Nation; and the Powhatan Lenape Nation, The Nanticoke of Millsboro Delaware, and the Lenape of Cheswold Delaware. We acknowledge the Lenni–Lenape as the original people of this land and their continuing relationship with their territory. In our acknowledgment of the continued presence of Lenape people in their homeland, we affirm the aspiration of the great Lenape Chief Tamanend, that there be harmony between the indigenous people of this land and the descendants of the immigrants to this land, “as long as the rivers and creeks flow, and the sun, moon, and stars shine.”

GATHERING SONG & CONNECTING

“In the beginning was love, and love was with God, and love was God.”

– Kamand Kojouri

“Love is what carries you, for it is always there, even in the dark, or most in the dark, but shining out at times like gold stitches in a piece of embroidery.”

– Wendell Berry

“God said, “Earth: bring forth all kinds of living soul cattle, things that crawl, and wild animals of all kinds!...So YHWH fashioned an earth creature out of the clay of the earth, and blew into its nostrils the breath of life. And the earth creature became a living being.”

– Genesis 1:25, 2:7 (The Inclusive Bible)

"The nitrogen in our DNA, the calcium in our teeth, the iron in our blood, the carbon in our apple pies were made in the interiors of collapsing stars. The cosmos is within us. We are made of star stuff."

– Carl Sagan

“God loves me. It still humbles me that this force that makes leaves and fleas and stars and rivers and you, loves me. Me. It’s amazing.”

– Maya Angelou

“This is the moment we ask for the blessing that lives within the ancient ashes, that makes its home inside the soil of this sacred earth.”

– Jan Richardson

This Ancient Love

**Long before the night was born from darkness,
long before the dawn rolled unsteady from fire,
long before she wrapped her scarlet arms around the hills,
there was a love, this ancient love was born.**

**Long before the grass spotted green the bare hillside,
long before a wing unfolded to wind,
long before she wrapped her long blue arm around the sea,
there was a love, this ancient love was born.**

**Long before a chain was forged from the hillside,
long before a voice uttered freedom's cry,
long before she wrapped her bleeding arms around a child,
there was a love, this ancient love was born.**

**Wakeful are our nights and slumbers our morning,
stubborn is the grass sowing green wounded hills,
as we wrap our healing arms to hold what her arms held,
this ancient love, this aching love rolls on.**

WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER

Jeff Wells (Church of the Village UMC)
Alexis Lillie (Church of the Village UMC)

KNOWING & SURRENDERING

All Things of Dust to Dust Return

**All things of dust to dust return
on earth and in the sky.
The hottest, brightest suns that burn
in time grow dim and die.
The fish that leap, the birds that soar,
the newborn young that play,
the leaves that fill the forest floor
revert to dust and clay.**

**God, mark with dust and ash my brow
so I may comprehend
that every moment here and now
links me to that same end.
I share with all that breathe and burn,
that flare and fade and tire,
yet by their waning light discern
your own undying fire.**

**God, mark upon my brow this sign:
a stark and barren cross,
reminding me that though divine,
you know my pain and loss,
and at the touch of dust and ash,
awake my heart to view
how death itself is but a flash
that dies away in you.**

ASHES AS SOLIDARITY

*From Cole Arthur Riley's Black Liturgies:
Prayers, Poems and Meditations for Staying Human*

“For dust you are
and to dust you will return.”
– Genesis 3:19 (NIV)

But still, like dust, I'll rise.
– Maya Angelou

“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.”

Stacey May (Rivers of Living Water UCC)
J. Terry Todd (Rivers of Living Water UCC)
Bernie Lopez (Rivers of Living Water UCC)

OPENING OUR HEARTS

In the Ashes (In the Waters)

**In the ashes, we are one,
in the ashes, we are one,
in the ashes, we are one.
We are one, we are one, we are one.**

In our praying...

Psalm 69

K Karpen (St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC)

RECEIVING THE ASHES

Lea Matthews (St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC)
Ekama Eni (St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC)

LIVING INTO THE ETERNITY OF DUST

A Moment of Prayer

Andrea Steinkamp (St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC)

One: We came from dust, earthy dust, the dust of creation.

All: We came from dust.

One: We came from dust, are shaped by dust, contain the cosmic dust of the infinite universe.

All: We came from dust.

One: We came from dust, carried by the Spirit of the wind, to holy and unimaginable places

All: We came from dust.

One: We will all return to dust, enabling the ever-renewing cycle of life

All: We came from dust.

One: We will all return to dust, maintaining connection to all things in a different form.

All: We came from dust.

One: We will all return to dust. As ever, God will be in us and we will be in God.

All: We came from dust.

Womb of Life

**Womb of life, and source of being,
home of every restless heart,
in your arms the world's awakened;
you have loved us from the start.
We, your children marked with ashes,
go into the wilderness,
staying connected to each other,
nurtured by your ancient love.**

WORSHIP HOSTS

Worship Design: Bernie Lopez, Stacey May, J. Terry Todd, K Karpen, Lea Matthews, Andrea Steinkamp, Jeff Wells, Alexis Lillie, Jorge Lockward, Alfida Figueroa & Katie Reimer

Readers: Alfida Figueroa & Becca Love

Dance Ministry: Maura Burns

Altar Design: John C. Flake

Visuals Design: Bailey Roach & Katie Reimer

Usher: Sam Winfrey

Organ: Michael Johnson

Keyboard: Katie Reimer

Sax/Clarinet/Flute/Bass: Matthew Willis

Zoom Host: Sarah Witman

CREDITS

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This Ancient Love

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All Things of Dust to Dust Return

W: Thomas H. Troeger

M: Kingsfold

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In the Ashes (In the Waters)

Words: Jorge Lockward

Music: Nehemiah Lockett

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Womb of Life

W: Ruth Duck

M: Natalie Sleeth

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This group is hosted by the Church of the Village but is open to all.

Lent is a time in the church calendar between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday often set aside for reflection and introspection. During this time, we will be offering a weekly discussion group based on the course, *God After Deconstruction*, created by Tripp Fuller and Thomas Jay Oord.

We encourage you to sign up* for access to the course, which consists of asynchronous presentations (released in February) that you can watch on your own at any time. Then, join us Wednesdays at 6:30pm ET via Zoom, starting on February 21st for a facilitated discussion led by Pastor Jeff and Pastor Alexis. Themes include scripture, the problem of evil, faith and science, sex and gender, and others. Links to both the course and the Zoom meetings can be found at www.churchofthevillage.org/groups.

If you're unable to watch the presentations, you're still welcome to participate in the Wednesday night discussions! It's sure to be a time of rich conversation and spiritual development. We hope you'll join us!

* The *God After Deconstruction* course is pay-what-you're-able. We encourage those who can to make a donation in support of Tripp and Tom's work. If you're interested in joining but unable to pay, please still register for the course: www.GodAfterDeconstruction.com