



# **Westminster United Church**

*celebrating over 125 years of ministry in the community*

**Ash Wednesday Worship Service**  
**Wednesday, March 6, 2019 at 6:30pm**  
**in the chapel**

Rev. Sherri McConnell, minister

Don Menzies, organist

Nathan Poole, director of music in worship

*Our service begins with the Prelude, inviting us into a time of contemplation and reflection.*

## Organ Prelude

### Words of Welcome

**Call to Worship** (*based on Genesis 2:7; 3: 19 Psalm 104: 29-30; John 1: 18*)

One: Friends, in the middle of our busy week, in the quiet darkness of evening, we pause.

**All: We come to remember that God made us from fragile, blessed dust; and breathes through us the breath of life and love.**

One: From dust we are created in God's image and to God's good dust we shall return.

**All: With dust and oil we claim the mark of being part of God's beloved creation.**

One: Today the 40-day journey of Lent begins. This is a time of contemplation, reflection, letting go and opening up, as we explore and discover who we are created to be as God's beloved people.

**All: Through whatever our spiritual practices might be – prayer, service, worship, music, reflection, study, contemplation, movement, meditation, all these things, or other things - we will move through this journey of Lent.**

One: We follow Jesus, God's Beloved Child,  
bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh  
In whom we see God's image most clearly.

**All: Holy God, we pray for the strength and imagination to follow Jesus wherever he leads this Lent.**

**Hymn** VU 382      Breathe on Me, Breath of God

## **Prayer of Confession**

One: For the times when we are too rushed to care;  
when we are too tired to bother;  
when we don't really listen;  
when we act from motives other than love,

**All: God forgive us**

(silence)

One: For those times when we seem incapable of feeling  
the

sufferings of others; for our tendency to live  
comfortably with injustice,

**All: God, forgive us.**

(silence)

One: For our failings in community and as a community;  
for our lack of understanding - and our misguided  
belief that we do,

**All: God forgive us.**

(silence)

One: For our lack of forgiveness, openness, sensitivity,

**All: God forgive us.**

(silence)

One: For self-righteousness that denies guilt,  
and self-interest that strangles compassion,

**All: God, forgive us.**

(silence)

**Solo**                    Take, O Take Me as I Am (MV 85)  
given by Rebecca McIntosh

**WORDS:** TAKE, O TAKE ME AS I AM; SUMMON OUT WHAT I SHALL BE; SET YOUR SEAL  
UPON MY HEART AND LIVE IN ME. (SUNG TWICE)

**Scripture Readings**

Proverbs 2: 1-5

One: Have mercy on us, O God,

**All: according to your steadfast love.**

Psalm 46: 10A (contemplatively)

One: Have mercy on us, O God,

**All: according to your steadfast love.**

John 15: 12

One: Have mercy on us, O God,

**All: according to your steadfast love.**

**Violin Solo**      Meditation by Cécile Chaminade  
given by Nathan Poole

**The Blessing of the Ashes**

One: For all those days  
we felt like dust,  
like dirt,  
as if all we had to do  
was turn our face  
toward the wind

and we would be scattered  
to the four corners,

**All: or swept away  
by the smallest breath.**

One: Did we not know  
what the Holy One  
can do with dust?

(silence)

One: This is the day  
we freely say  
we are scorched.

This is the hour  
we are marked  
by what has made it  
through the burning.

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.

(silence)

So let us be marked  
not for sorrow.

**All: And let us be marked  
not for shame.**

One: Let us be marked  
not for false humility,

**All: or for thinking  
we are less  
than we are,**

One: but for claiming  
what God can do  
within the dust,  
within the dirt,  
within the stuff  
of which the world  
is made  
and the stars that blaze  
in our bones  
and the galaxies that spiral  
inside the smudge  
we bear.

**All: Through the dust and the ashes of our living, this is  
the moment we ask for the blessing and mark of God's  
love for the world. Amen.**

## **The Imposition of Ashes**

*All are invited to come forward to receive ashes on your forehead or back of your hand - to remember that you are God's beloved dust...*

**Hymn VU 278**      *In the Quiet Curve of Evening*

## **Benediction**

Blessings, like God's love, are not one-way experiences. As we have been blessed with the mark of God's love we are now called to go out from this place and bless others.

And as we go -  
may the God who created us create opportunities for us for serving others. May the Christ who teaches us teach us during Lent how to love all. And may the Spirit of Gentleness be our companion along this Lenten journey.  
**Amen.**

**Organ Postlude**    *If departing before the end of the postlude, please do so quietly for the benefit of those remaining to enjoy the music.*

*There will be coffee, tea and a time of fellowship in the library immediately following this evening's service, where all are welcome.*



**Westminster United Church**  
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*All are Welcome!*

**Sunday Worship Services 10:30 am**  
**Palm Sunday Service, April 14 @ 10:30 am**  
**Maundy Thursday Service, April 18 @ 7 pm**  
**Good Friday Service, April 19 @ 10:30 am**  
**Easter Sunday Service, April 21 @ 10:30 am**