

# Saint Mark's Lutheran Church

508 Harry Street | Conshohocken, PA 19428

stmarksconshy.org

*Ash Wednesday*

*February 17, 2021*

- *To Join our virtual worship space click on this link:*
  - *Join Zoom Meeting*
  - *<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83219307196?pwd=UGxCc0ROdVhjelhEWmhVRy9sN2hjQT09>*
  - *Meeting ID: 832 1930 7196*
  - *Passcode: saintmarks*
- *Using the Zoom Controls, you can turn on and off your video and mute and unmute your microphone. For most of the worship service the presiding minister will keep the assembly on mute so that you can follow along.*
- *During worship we will celebrate communion, so if you wish to participate with us, we invite you to grab some bread, and some wine or grape juice so that when we get to the MEAL, we can celebrate together.*
- *You are invited to speak the assembly responses and sing, but we ask that you stay on mute so that all may participate together.*

## Welcome to St. Mark's!

## We're so glad you are with us today.

No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you have a place here.

***This is Christ's Church. There is a place for you here.*** We are a church that shares a living and daring confidence in God's grace. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person - questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

***We gather in community.*** Despite the mandate to "physical distance" we gather in community across virtual means. We welcome those who may be joining us from afar! If you would like to be added to our mailing list, leave your address in the Chat on Zoom. We are so glad that you have joined us today!

# Gathering

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*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

## Prelude

*Various*

## Introduction to Virtual Worship

*The Presiding Minister introduces us to our virtual worship space and about our service for this evening*

## Call to Worship

We are invited—

**Into the story,**

**Into this place,**

**Into this hour of worship.**

We are invited—

**Into reflection,**

**Into community,**

**Into our own spiritual journeys.**

We are invited—

**The broken and bruised,**

**The hopeful, the new,**

**The faithful, the doubting,**

**The wondering, the waiting.**

We are invited—

**Because God so loved;**

So listen, trust the invitation, and bring your whole self.

**All are invited here.**

# Opening Song

## Come, Come, Whoever You Are

Rumi

Shim Shai (adapted)

Come, come, who - e - ver you are, wand-er-er, wor-ship-per, lo - ver of lea-ving, and  
 come, come, who - e - ver you are. This is-n't a ca - ra - van of des - pair. And come,  
 come, who - e - ver you are, wan-der-der, wor-ship-per, lo - ver of lea-ving and come,  
 come, who - e - ver you are, this is-n't a car - a - van of des - pair. 'Cause it does - n't  
 mat-ter if you've bro-ken your vows a thou - sand times be - fore.  
 repeat indefinitely, last time end here.  
 Yet a - gain, come. Come a - gain, come. Yet a - gain, come.

### Invitation to Lent

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus’ passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God’s mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, again and again, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline

of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Ash Wednesday is a special day because it marks the start of something new. We are standing at the door of a journey into deeper faith, and God is inviting us in. However, we know that we cannot grow deeper and be transformed without God’s help. So as we begin this season, we confess together, asking for God’s participation in this new beginning. We are asking God to hold open the door.

Let us pray:

## **Confession and Forgiveness**

Holy God—

We know that you are near,

For you are always here, gathered among us, just a breath away.

And despite knowing your nearness, we still stumble over ourselves, unsure of how to pray.

**Bring our hearts into the room.**

So often we talk to you like a stranger,

Praying prayers of small talk about the weather and surface level concerns. We keep genuine fear and doubt tucked into corners, out of sight, out of mind.

**Bring our hearts into the room.**

And so often we try to think our way to you,

As if we could use logic or our minds alone to explain your great unknown. We forget what we knew as children; we forget how to feel our way to you.

**Bring our hearts into the room.**

And too regularly, we limit our experience of you to one hour a Sunday, Missing your constant invitation into the holiness all around us. Forgive us. Guide us.

**Bring our hearts into the room.**

We are here, God. We want to begin again.

**Bring our hearts into the room. Amen.**

Friends, whether you are standing at the door of a deeper faith journey,

Unsure of what comes next,

Or running your way through that threshold,

You are claimed, forgiven, and loved by God.

**Again and again, we are forgiven.**

**Again and again, we are loved.**

**Again and again, we are invited in.**

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

**Amen.**

## Word

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*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

### Setting the Space

*The year 2020 taught us just how much our space matters. Many of us realized just how holy our sanctuaries are for us when we were unable to physically gather within them. However, this season has also reminded us that God does not reside in any one place, for God is everywhere—and God promises to draw near to us wherever we may be. And so, as we begin, we invite you to mark your space so that your soul knows: **this is holy ground.***

*To mark your sacred space, we suggest lighting a candle. Maybe find a comfortable spot to sit, or settle yourself into your favorite chair. Take some time to gather your supplies. Most importantly, turn your phone notifications off so that you can truly be present.*

*As you finish setting your space we will take a few deep breaths in and out. Repeat to yourself:*

I am here. God is here.

### Opening Prayer

*Now that the space is set, we begin with prayer.*

Creator God,

There is a rumbling in us that won't let go.  
It stirs in us like the wind stirs leaves—inviting us to move,  
drawing us forth.  
When we're quiet, we know that rumble is the Holy Spirit,  
Dancing love awake in us.  
So we're here.  
And we're still.  
And we're quiet.  
And on this first day of Lent, we're asking you to draw near.  
As we hear your scripture read aloud, open the door for us to move.  
Invite us in. Rumble us awake.  
Gratefully we pray, **Amen**.

## **Listen** *Beginning with Honesty*

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face  
you shall eat bread  
until you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken;  
you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return." ~ Genesis

## **Reflect**

*This verse—spoken to us when we receive the imposition of ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday—reminds us of our humanity. So in full honesty, make a list of 5-10 challenges you are struggling with, recognizing that life is messy and life is complicated. Name anything that is hard or heavy in this moment. Write them down in your journal or on the doodle page. Challenge yourself to think of the core emotion underlying each challenge. For example, instead of simply saying, "I'm busy," perhaps you might confess: "I overcommit myself because I worry that others will think I'm selfish if I say no." Name your challenges and your confessions, offering them all to God.*

*Take a moment to look over your list. Ask God for forgiveness for the things you can control. Ask God for grace for the things you cannot.*

## Listen

*Our God is intimately aware of our humanity and the many ways we fall short or get stuck in the weeds of our own problems. Having confessed and written down some of the challenges that weigh heavily on you, listen to the following poem as a reminder of God's grace:*

I like to imagine that each year,  
God invites me to a party.  
God drops me a note that says,  
“No gifts, casual dress. Come just as you are.”

I like to imagine that I am brave enough to go.  
I like to imagine that I decide that I am worth it.  
This was no pity invite,  
There is no obligatory postage.  
God wants me there.

So I get myself together,  
Smudged glasses, sensitive ego, wrinkled shirt, and all.  
I ring the doorbell a few minutes late on account of the fact that  
I lost my keys twice trying to get out the door,  
And I almost turn back to hide in my car,  
Afraid that I might embarrass myself over appetizers or small talk.  
But then God answers the door,  
And God says, “You’re here!”  
And I smile, because I am.

And with every step past that threshold,  
I know that God is cheering me on.  
It’s the pride of a parent watching their child take their first step.  
If I freeze, God is not disappointed.  
If I fall, God is not mad.  
But if I trust the invitation,  
If I move closer,  
I know, God celebrates.

Friends, you've got mail.  
It's an invitation to dust off your shoes,  
To go deeper,  
To trust that you're worth it,  
To lose your keys and your faith,  
And then to find them both, along with your worth.  
You are invited.  
We are invited.  
Again and again and again.  
This invitation is for you.  
—Rev. Sarah Are

## Listen

“A Pep Talk from Kid President to You” Created by Kid President and Brad Montague. Published by SoulPancake.

## Respond

*Having read scripture and poetry, named the challenges you are facing, and watched these invitational videos, now write down 5-10 hopes you have for this Lenten season. Allow these videos to be encouragement for living life with intention. You can write your hopes in your journal or on your doodle page.*

*As you write, consider these written hopes to be intentions that you are setting for the six weeks ahead. These are not intended to be aimless wishes on stars, but instead, thoughtful intentions for your one wild and precious life.*

## Song

*Beautiful Things*

Gungor

## Meal

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*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ*

## Welcome to the Table

We come again and again, to the table where we are made new and restored to wholeness. Here the failures of our past are remade and

we are made beautiful in the abundant grace of God.

## Words of Institution

*ELW p. 206*

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
Shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

### *Instructions for the Lord's Prayer*

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## Invitation to Communion

*Here at St. Mark's we invite all people to the Lord's Table no matter where you are on your faith journey. This is Christ present for you – freely offered in bread and wine – all are welcome to commune.*

Again & Again, Jesus draws the whole world to himself.  
Come to this meal and be fed.

## Distribution of Communion

*Today we will receive along with the presiding minister or invite those who have gathered together to commune one another by distributing the*

*elements or offering a blessing.*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*and each person may respond -- Amen.*

## Communion Blessing

*The assembly receives the blessing*

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

## Prayer after Communion

God of steadfast love,

at this table you gather your people  
into one body for the sake of the world.

Send us in the power of your Spirit,  
that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new  
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## Sending

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*God blesses us and send us in mission to the world*

### Blessing

As you leave this space,

May your mouth speak of God's goodness.

May your arms hold those in need.

May your feet walk toward justice.

May your heart trust its worth.

May your soul dance in God's grace.

And may this be your rhythm—

Again and again and again,

Until God's promised day.

In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,

Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.

**Amen.**

# Sending Hymn

Bless the Lord

Taize

Bless the Lord, my soul, and Bless God's ho - ly name.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life.

## Dismissal

*The assisting minister sends us forth*

Go in peace. Remember the Poor.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Postlude

*Various*

# Leading us in Worship

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**Presiding Minister**  
**Dir. of Music Ministry**  
**Digital Sacristan**  
**Altar Guild**

The Rev. Bryan Penman  
Emily Ballentine Erb  
Bre Myers  
Sheldon Erb

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