



## **“Shattered”**

*Ash Wednesday  
February 17, 2021*

### **Prelude**

### **Welcome and Announcements**

### **Threshold**

**Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.**

...

*Leader:* Ash Wednesday is a time of naming brokenness. As we enter the season of Lent, we commit to enter also into a season of healing and recovery that requires the naming of what has been shattered as a first step. We take “the yoke” of responsibility as disciples of Jesus to be the Body of Christ—a body of those who need healing and offer healing in the world. The promise of Jesus is that he is with us in our weariness and burdens.

**Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.**

## **Prayer of Confession**

We will be living with stories of Jesus' healing in the Gospel of Matthew in this Lent season. We will see how Jesus encouraged people to open up about their lives as part of the healing process—no matter how broken. Ash Wednesday developed as a doorway to speaking the truth of our lives, a time to lay the brokenness of life before God.

Let us pray:

Merciful God,  
we have lived a year of Lent.  
In the midst of it all we have seen love shine through at times  
but as we look back in this moment,  
it feels like a year of shattered dreams and shattered peace.  
We are discouraged. Even though so much feels out of our control,  
we also see the ways our own faults and failures  
to love each other fully, to care for the least, to honor your creation,  
to stand for what is right and good, have contributed to the shattering.

And so, we come to you in pieces.  
Fragments, broken shells of our past selves.  
As we walk along the shores of Uncertainty and Pain,  
we ask that you meet us here.

Help us, Healer.  
Show us our strength.  
Forgive our inertia.  
Move us to move  
one step at a time toward greater care.

In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning for wholeness.

*Silence*

**Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.**

## **Assurance**

Throughout the season of Lent, we will be contemplating the symbol of broken glass—sea (or beach) glass to be specific. An unknown author has said this about the glass fragments that are collected on various shores:

*“Ordinary pieces of tableware or beer or soda bottles are flung into the ocean. Years pass, or decades, and then one day, there it is upon the shore: a small shard from one of those long-ago discarded objects. Shifting currents have rounded its edges; abrasion has polished its surface; exposure to the sun has altered its hue. And so, when we happen upon it, here amidst the shells and seaweed, we can’t help but laugh with joy at what seems a miracle: this ordinary fragment of silica that time and adversity have transformed into something beautiful.”*

Time and adversity... making something beautiful out of that which, once seen as ordinary and broken, is now considered a transformed and precious piece. This is the Lenten journey we now undertake.

Jesus attended to those considered ordinary, broken, even those deemed unworthy. No matter what, Jesus *is* the lover of our souls.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.**

**Glory to God. Amen.**

## **Opening Hymn**

*“Jesus, Lover of My Soul”*

*GTG 440*

## **Peace**

In this moment, we begin to “let the healing streams abound.”

The peace of Christ is with you.

**And also with you.**

## **Children’s Time**

## **A Contemporary Word**

Our life is full of brokenness—broken relationships, broken promises, broken expectations. How can we live with that brokenness without becoming bitter and resentful except by returning again and again to God’s faithful presence in our lives.

— **Henri Nouwen**

Until we learn to love others as ourselves, it’s difficult to blame broken people who desperately try to affirm themselves when no one else will.

— **Richard Rohr**

If you cannot speak of your brokenness, your brokenness will speak for you.

— **Peter Rollins**

## **Musical Proclamation**

*“God Weeps”*

*STF 2048*

## **An Ancient Word**

**Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler**

*Matthew 11: 28-30*

*Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

## **Song of Preparation**

*“Make Us Holy, Make Us Whole” (refrain only)*

*SongSelect #3315976*

**In your love, make us whole.  
May we rest in your compassion.  
Calm the lost, weary soul  
in the warmth of your love.  
May your peace fill our hearts.  
May we know the love of Jesus.  
By your grace, you console.  
Make us holy, make us whole.**

## Prayers of the People

### The Lord's Prayer

#### *Refrain*

**In your love, make us whole.  
May we rest in your compassion.  
Calm the lost, weary soul  
in the warmth of your love.  
May your peace fill our hearts.  
May we know the love of Jesus.  
By your grace, you console.  
Make us holy, make us whole.**

### Ritual Action

Ash Wednesday, as the beginning of Lent, developed in the 5th - 6th centuries, and was mandated in the 11th century. Although Protestants did not maintain this ritual for the most part, it has come back during the 20th century liturgical movement as an important time for reflection in which we reclaimed this symbol and ritual of our spiritual ancestors. It plays an important role in helping us make meaning in the brokenness of our lives. This year, indeed, we are aware of the fragility of life. Even though we cannot share ashes in the ways we have become accustomed, let us engage in a ritual that draws us close to the elements of creation—earth, fire, air, and water. Let it remind us that we are a part of creation, in all its beauty and its brokenness.

**EARTH** – Soil begins as dirt. Natural soil formation takes thousands or millions of years and is as rocks erode into sand and organic matter decays and accumulates. This decomposition is done primarily by wind, water, and climate. Sand too is created by the erosion of mountains and rocks over thousands or millions of years. So, whether dirt or sand, we are witnessing the brokenness and erosion and weathering of the earth itself. There is a rhythm to this process—rocks are “broken” and “transformed”. Over the course of our lives, we get chipped...broken and this brokenness can be transformed into something beautiful and life giving. Every form we take is holy, whole, and beautiful. I invite you now to touch the sand or dirt you have with you in this moment. Feel its grains, it's decomposed nature, as we pray:

*Holy Creator God... as we feel this elemental part of who we are, we remember that we ourselves were made from the dust of the earth. To experience brokenness is the way of creation, it is not something to be ashamed of... it is the order of things. Transform our brokenness, O God into beauty... let us see the goodness born out of transformation.*

**FIRE** - Sand upon which beach glass washes is necessary for making glass. Yet glass can only be created when the sand is met with the heat of fire. No wonder the scriptures and poets throughout the ages have spoken of a “refining fire.” The heat of fire is always destructive, but

with intention and care and tending, what transpires from the destruction of sand by fire can be a new form with purposes that are good, useful, and beautiful. I invite you to light your candle, if it is not already lit. Gaze upon the colors of the flame which may be white or gold or red or blue, as we pray:

***Holy Refining Fire of the Spirit... as we feel this elemental part of who we are, we remember that you invite us to fuel the flames of passionate love for you and for each other. Do not allow the flame of our spirits to lie dormant. Offer us your light and life. Transform us, O God. Help us recover the beauty of who we are and see the goodness in transformation.***

**AIR** - The scriptures depict the creation of human beings as having Holy Breath blown into us to animate our being. Glass vessels gained a new technique around the time of Jesus. In the first century BCE, glass blowing was invented, offering a way for molten glass to be shaped by blowing through a tube, creating an air bubble, a glass vessel, ready to for practical or artistic purposes. Breath is part of the creation of our Holy Vessels. Breath is with us in our first borning cry and will be the final song as we exit earth-time and return to God. I invite you to close your eyes, if this is comfortable for you, and become aware of your breath as we pray:

***Holy Giver of Breath and Life... as we feel this elemental part of who we are, we remember that this ongoing, life-giving, usually-automatic, moment-to-moment function called breathing can be an act of gratitude for our very origins. This is the core of our relationship with the creation—sharing and existing within the Earth’s atmosphere. Our outward breath of exhale offers us opportunity to let go of that which literally and metaphorically we do not need in order to take in...to inhale the fresh air we do need, a breath that transform us. O God, help us recover the beauty of who we are and see the goodness in transformation.***

**WATER** – At the shoreline, water meets the earth...the sand. During this season of Lent we are invited to meet Christ, the Holy Beachcomber, who offers us Living Water. Water that wets the soil of our lives and transforms and heals us. Ancient peoples made wet soil in many forms as healing balms. Skin moistened, blood flow increased to the area, muscles relaxed. The use of healing balms is still practiced today in many places. Our Lenten series is about healing. I invite you to mix a little water with the dirt you have and create a wet mixture. Then place some in your palm—the same palm used in greeting other palms, signifying interdependent relationship. Gently rub the dirt and make the sign of the cross on your forehead or if you prefer in the palm of your hand.

Repeat after me: *From dust I came and to dust I shall return.*

Let us pray:

***Healing Presence... as we remember this elemental part of who we are, we remember you created us, shaped us from dust.  
Some day we will return to dust,  
return to and rest in the palm of your hands once again, held and loved forever.  
We lament in this moment the grittiness of life,***

*the need for healing, the difficult and necessary process of transformation.  
Marked as your own forever, remold us again and again and again as your people. Let the  
recognition of our own need break us open again for the sake of others, for the sake of the  
world.*

*All the people say, "Selah" All the people say, "Amen."*

## **Musical Proclamation**

*"Sign Us With Ashes"*

*GTG 433*

## **Holy Communion**

### **Invitation to the Table**

Our God is with you!

**And also with you!**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to our God.**

Let us give thanks to our Sovereign God

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,

always and everywhere to give thanks to you,

In the beginning you breathed life into raw materials,

creating and animating containers of beauty and goodness.

We, your Holy Vessels, were fired in the kiln of love

until we shined with your light.

Susceptible to shattering, we find ourselves broken,

unable at times to remember your promise of repair.

You remind us time and again that, though broken,

we are held in your presence

and made whole by your grace.

And so,

with your people on earth

and all the company of heaven

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ,  
Holy Vessel of Divine Presence on earth.  
Your Spirit anointed him as a container of grace in the form of  
preaching good news to the poor,  
proclaiming release to the captives  
recovering of sight to the blind,  
setting at liberty those who are oppressed,  
and announcing that the time had come  
when you would save your people.  
He healed the sick,  
fed the hungry,  
and ate with those considered too broken for company.  
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection  
you gave birth to the path of healing and recovery,  
delivered us from our despair and isolation,  
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

When Jesus ascended,  
he promised to be with us always.  
In the power of your Word and Holy Spirit,  
we are not alone.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,  
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,  
gave it to his disciples, and said:  
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup,  
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
poured out for you and for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.”

And so,  
in remembrance of the healing, life-transforming acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,  
in union with Christ’s offering for us,  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**



Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
Make them be for us your Healing Spirit through Christ,  
so that we may be for the world the body of Christ,  
healing agents in a broken world,  
offering the life-blood of hope.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,  
one with each other,  
and one in ministry to all the world,  
until Christ comes in final victory  
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ  
with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,  
all honor and glory is yours, Healing God,  
now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Communion of God's People**

### **Prayer After Communion**

### **Closing Song**

*"Give to the Winds Thy Fears"*  
GTG 815

### **Charge and Benediction**

Now go with confidence that,  
though shattered, we are held in the palm of God's hands... in the love of God.  
Begin the journey of recovering your depth of love for all  
and your joy of living in this world.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:  
"I will give you rest."

And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver  
Healing balm to your soul  
and a spring in your step.

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 holy rhythm—  
The rhythm of Again and again and again,  
Until God's promised day.  
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself.  
You are God's treasure.. a broken vessel...a holy vessel.  
So go with courage, go with heart, go in peace. Amen.

**Amen.**

## **Threshold Into the World**

*[reprise of theme song]*

**Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.**

## **Postlude**

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