

First Presbyterian Church of Monroe
Ash Wednesday
March 2, 2022



On My Way

**“You said return to me, so here I am
skin and bones held together
with memories and a little bit of duct tape.
I am bringing it all because you said
return to me, edits not required
so return I will.
And not all of it will be bad.
Some of it will be lovely.”**



ASH WEDNESDAY

Full to the Brim - *With all that you are*

God loves the real you—the messy, authentic, honest you.

God, I am so used to putting on a filter. I slide into different versions of myself based on the room I'm in, but I don't want to do that with you. I want to bring my full self, the one you created. Give me the strength to pull back the layers. Give me the strength to bring exactly who I am to you, knowing it is more than enough. Amen.

Gather in Silence

“Nada Te Turbe/Nothing Can Trouble”

Na-da te tur-be, na-da te es-pan-te

“Noth-ing can trou-ble, noth-ing can fright-en.

Quien a Dios tie-ne na-da le fal-ta

Those who seek God shall never go wanting.

Na-da te tur-be, na-da te es-pan-te

Noth-ing can trou-ble, noth-ing can fright-en.

So-lo Dios bas-ta.

God a-lone fills us.

Call to Worship

“Even now, declares the Lord,
return to me with all your heart.” (Joel 2:12)

Roll up your sleeves.

Let down your guard.

Come in from the storm.

Make yourself at home.

Pull up to the table.

Release the tension in your jaw.

Take a deep breath.

Return to God with all your heart.

May it be so.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession + Words of Forgiveness

**Holy God, we confess: we don't return to you fully.
We share with you the pieces of our lives that are
convenient. We put on different hats in different rooms.
We forget that we are called, invited, and loved with all that we
are— including our mess, our beauty, our faith, and our doubt.
Forgive us, and give us hearts that long to return.**

Friend, God sees you. God hears you. God loves you. You are forgiven and claimed with all that you are. Rest in this good news.

Thanks be to God, amen.

“My Soul is At Rest”

“My soul is at rest in God alone; my salvation comes from God.”

Prayer for Illumination

Loving Creator,
we are here,
telling stories of dust.
We are here,
trying to shake the dust
out of our ears
so that we might hear you clearly.
We are here,
hoping that showing up
is the first step in returning to you.
Scoop us up in your embrace
and carry us to a place of truth.
Clear the fog that makes it hard to see.
Clear the dust that makes it hard to hear.
We are at the edge of our seats.
We are listening for you.
Amen.

Scripture

Isaiah 58:1-12

“O Lord, Hear My Prayer”

*O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord hear my prayer.
When I call an-swer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord hear my prayer.
Come and lis-ten to me.*

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

“O Lord, Hear My Prayer”

*The Lord is my song;. The Lord is my praise:.
All my hope comes from God.
The Lord is my song;. The Lord is my praise:.
All my hope comes from God.*

*Imposition of Ashes

The Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Table

Jesus has always been one to invite.

He said, “Drop your nets and follow me.”

He said, “Let the little children come.”

He said, “Stand up from your mat, you are healed.”

Jesus has always been one to invite, and that has not changed.

So friends, we are invited to this Table. Each and every one of us—with our doubts, our fears, our scars, our joy, our dreams, our hopes, our questions—we are invited to God's table.

And here we will be met. Here we will be fed. Here we are given a taste of an expansive life that is full to the brim with love, overflowing with joy.

So come. Not because we must, but because we can.

Come. We are invited. This Table is for us.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

God who knows us, we are amazed by you.

Your love never runs out, your hope never runs dry, your joy never gives up.

We wish that we could be more like you in that way.

In a world that loves scarcity, your abundance is shocking.

In a world that knows fear, your joy is compelling.
In a world that knows anxiety, your peace is captivating.
We long for these things.

So today we ask you—be with us.

Be with us when compassion fatigue rears her head.
Be with us when stress makes it hard to breathe.
Be with us when self-doubt pushes in close.
Be with us when exhaustion becomes constant or when loneliness becomes our primary language.
Be with us, and show us the way to the life you long for us.
Show us a life of expansive faith.
Show us a life of overflowing joy.
Show us a life of absorbing beauty.
Show us a life of engrossing purpose.
Show us a life that is as honest, and rich, and meaningful as the one Jesus led.

And until that expansive and holy day, we will continue to gather at this Table. Until that day we will continue to look for you in our midst.
So pour out a double portion of yourself onto this bread and cup so that we might catch a glimpse of your goodness.

God, we are amazed by you.
Your love never runs out, so bring that never-ending love here.
Together we pray:

Our Father. . .

Continue with the Lord's Prayer in the language and wording most familiar to you.

Breaking of the Bread

Communion

Prayer After Communion

“Come Fill Our Hearts with Your Peace”

*Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You a-lone, O Lord, are ho-ly.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Lo-rd Pri-nce of Peace.*

Benediction

**All who wish to do so may stand*

Words/images are signposts that point us to God; yet these words/images are not God. Realizing words have power, every effort is made to use inclusive, expansive language for God. You are invited to substitute word/images that are most comfortable for you during this time of worship.

A special welcome to our guests. Your presence among us is a gift to our beloved community. We trust God will draw you back to God's home—here at First Presbyterian Church of Monroe. Would you give us the privilege of connecting with you by signing a pew card and placing it in the offering plate?



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