

Service of Ashes
February 22, 2023

No matter who you are,
No matter where you are
On life's journey,
You are welcome here.

Please silence cell phones.

*Bibles for use during worship are available at each entrance to the Sanctuary.
Assisted listening devices and Bluetooth hearing aid guides are in the Narthex.*

THOUGHT FOR PREPARATION

"No, I don't feel death coming / I feel death going;
having thrown up his hands / for the moment." From *Amen* by James Baldwin

PRELUDE

Komm, süßer Tod BWV 478
(Come, Sweet Death)
Kurt R. Hansen, tenor
Kevin Dzierzawski, organ

J. S. Bach

Come, sweet death, come, blessed rest!
Come lead me to peace for I am weary of the world,
O come! I wait for you, come soon and lead me,
close my eyes. Come, blessed rest!

CHORAL INTROIT

Just as I Am
Chancel Choir

WELCOME

Matt Fitzgerald

* CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Blessed are those whose transgression is forgiven.

All: Blessed are those in whose spirit there is no deceit.

One: While I kept silent, my body wasted away.

All: Then I acknowledged my sin and said:

"I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."

One: And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

All: You surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

* *Please stand if you are able to do so.*

* HYMN

Be Still My Soul



1. Be still, my soul: for God is on your side; _____
2. Be still, my soul: for God will un - der - take _____
3. Be still, my soul: the hour will soon be here _____



— bear pa - tient - ly the cross of grief or pain; _____ Leave to your
— to guide in fu - ture days as in the past. _____ Your hope, your
— when we shall be with God whom we a - dore, _____ with dis - ap -



God to or - der and pro - vide; _____ in ev - ery change God
con - fi - dence let noth - ing shake; _____ all now mys - te - rious
- point - ment gone, no grief nor fear, _____ sor - row re - placed with



faith - ful will re - main. _____ Be still, my soul: your best e - ter - nal
shall be clear at last. _____ Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still
joy for - ev - er - more. _____ Be still, my soul: when change and tears are



friend _____ through thorn - y ways leads to a joy - ful end.
know _____ how Je - sus' pow - er ruled them long a - go.
past, _____ all safe and bless - ed we shall meet at last.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER

Liz Nickerson

One: O God, you are unflinchingly faithful. We are repeatedly unfaithful.

All: You are merciful. We are defiant.

One: You come to us. We withdraw.

All: You are wholly concerned with us. We are otherwise occupied.

One: Christ makes himself known. We make our own gods.

All: God, You are utterly self-giving. We are turned in upon ourselves.

One: You are always ready to give. We are never ready to receive.

All: Your Word is a radiant message of joy. We turn it into a gloomy rule.

One: All of this is no less against ourselves than it is against you, O Lord.

All: And yet, You still forgive. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

Amen.

1. What won - drous love is this, O my soul! O my soul! What
 2. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing, to
 3. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and

won - drous love is this, O my soul! What won - drous love is
 God and to the Lamb, I will sing; To God and to the
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing on! And when from death I'm

this! that Christ should come in bliss to bear the heav - y cross for my
 Lamb who is the great I Am, while mil - lions join the theme, I will
 free, I'll sing and joy - ful be, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing

soul, for my soul, to bear the heav - y cross for my soul!
 sing, I will sing; while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing.
 on, I'll sing on, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on!

SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 5:21-6:10

Be reconciled with God; he's already reconciled with you.

How? you ask. In Christ. God judged him for sin, he who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God. So, as co-operators with God himself, we beg you not to fail to use the grace of God.

God reminds us,

"At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

Now is the right time to listen! Now is the day of salvation! Don't put it off; don't frustrate God's work by showing up late, throwing a question mark over everything we're doing. Our work as God's servants gets validated—or not—in the details. We put no obstacles in anyone's way. We stay at our post unswervingly...through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see--we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

* A STATEMENT OF FAITH

**We believe in God who has created and is creating,
who has come to us in Jesus Christ to reconcile and make us new,
who works in us and others by the Holy Spirit.**

**We trust God. God calls us to be the Church,
to celebrate God's presence,
to love and serve others,
to care for creation,
to seek justice and to resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.**

In life and death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God! *(adapted from the United Church of Canada)*

* RESPONSE	<i>What Wondrous Love Is This</i> See previous hymn	v. 2
SERMON	"Using the Grace of God"	Matt Fitzgerald
* RESPONSE	<i>What Wondrous Love Is This</i> See previous hymn	v. 3
OFFERTORY	<i>Abide with Me</i> Chancel Choir	William H. Monk arr. Moses Hogan

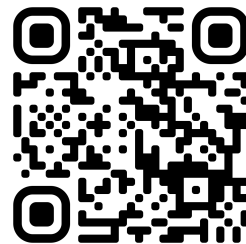
Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens, Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.
I need Thy presence every passing hour.
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me. Amen.

You can give to St. Pauls electronically by:

Scanning this code with your cell phone camera,

At spucc.churchcenter.com/giving,

Or through Zelle or PayPal to giving@spucc.org.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Jeff Carlson

All: Most holy and merciful God: We confess to you and to one another, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

One: We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

All: Have mercy on us, Lord.

One: We have not listened to your call to serve, as Christ served us. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

All: Have mercy on us, Lord.

One: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy and impatience of our lives;

All: Have mercy on us, Lord.

One: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

All: We confess to you, Lord.

One: Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

All: We confess to you, Lord.

One: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to tend the faith that is in us,

All: We confess to you, Lord.

One: Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done: for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

All: Accept our repentance, Lord.

One: For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

All: Accept our repentance, Lord.

One: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

KYRIE

Richard Webster

SILENT REFLECTION AND PERSONAL CONFESSION

*Use the blank piece of paper in your bulletin for personal confession.
Bring it forward to the basket on the table when instructed.*

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*If you wish to receive ashes, remain at the front after
placing your confession in the container.*

*If you do not wish to receive ashes, return to your seat.
If you do not wish to come forward at all, please remain seated.*

MEDITATION

Komm, süßer Tod
Kevin Dzierzawski, organ

J. S. Bach
arr. Virgil Fox

ANTHEM

There Is a Balm in Gilead African American Spiritual
Chancel Choir arr. William Dawson
Breanna and Todd Coe, soloists

*Refrain: There is a Balm in Gilead,
To make the wounded whole,
There is a Balm in Gilead,
To heal the sin-sick soul.*

Sometimes I feel discouraged,
And think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit,
revives my soul again. *Refrain*

If you cannot sing like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus,
And say he died for all. *Refrain*
based on Jeremiah 8:22

* LITANY OF ASSURANCE

One: There is therefore now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.

All: If God is for us, who is against us?

One: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus
has set us free from the law of sin and death.

**All: The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing
with the glory to be revealed to us.**

One: We know that all things work together for good
for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose.

**All: If God is for us, who is against us?
It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?**

* HYMN

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

1. In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tower - ing
2. When the woes of life o'er - take me, hopes de -
3. When the sun of bliss is beam - ing light and
4. Bane and bless - ing, pain and plea - sure, by the
5. In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tower - ing

o'er the wrecks of time; All the light of sa - cred
- ceive, and fears an - noy, Nev - er shall the cross for -
love up - on my way, From the cross the ra - diance
cross are sanc - ti - fied; Peace is there that knows no
o'er the wrecks of time; All the light of sa - cred

sto - ry gath - ers 'round its head sub - lime.
- sake me: Lo! it glows with peace and joy.
stream - ing adds more lus - ter to the day.
mea - sure, joys that through all time a - bide.
sto - ry gath - ers 'round its head sub - lime.

* BENEDICTION

*After the benediction, the congregation will follow the pastors to the courtyard
for the burning of the confessions.*

POSTLUDE

Toccata in e minor
Kevin Dzierzawski, organ

Johann Pachelbel

Amen

No, I don't feel death coming.
I feel death going;
having thrown up his hands,
for the moment.

I feel like I know him
better than I did.
Those arms held me,
for a while,
and, when we meet again,
there will be that secret knowledge
between us.

James Baldwin

PERSONAL CONFESSION

Included in this evening's bulletin is a blank piece of paper on which you may write a personal confession or some other burden that you wish to give to God: a grudge you no longer want to carry, a secret you no longer need to keep to yourself, a resentment you no longer wish to nurture, a grief you no longer care to bear alone. Please come forward during the imposition of ashes to place your personal confession in the offering plate in the front of the church. Following the service, the confessions will be burned as our offering to God. If you do not wish to receive ashes, you may bring your confession forward and simply return to your seat. If you do not wish to come forward at all, you may remain seated.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent for the Christian Church. Lent is a 40-day period before Easter patterned after the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert in fasting and prayer. The 40 days do not include Sundays, which are considered "days of resurrection" in the midst of a time of confession and prayer.

Ash Wednesday, which was first observed in the fourth century, has been linked most often to the Roman Catholic Church, but it actually predates Roman Catholicism and comes from our common early church heritage. Ash Wednesday, along with several other "acts" of worship, was lost during the Protestant Reformation as a result of that period's heavy emphasis on preaching the Word. The imposition of ashes upon the foreheads of believers was, and is, a sign of human mortality. The ancient Biblical reference is from Genesis 3, when God speaks these words to Adam and Eve: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return."

In a day when the grand promise of human progress and potential has come to some not-so-grand ends, it is necessary for all Christians to bear public witness to the fact that we human beings do not have the final word in life. We are not all good, all powerful, all loving; only God is, and we must recognize it.

During the service, we will make a statement of confession and recognize our human limitation through the ashes. We appreciate your presence at the Ash Wednesday Service whether you come forward to participate in the imposition of ashes or choose to remain seated during this part of the service.

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Komm, süßer Tod (*Come, sweet death*) BWV 478 is from a short collection of solo songs, *Geistliches Lieder*, by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). It expresses one of the deeply held tenets of the Lutheran faith at Bach's time, the view that death was both a "sweet" release from the pains of life and the promise of eternal life with Jesus. This melody is also employed in the Meditation this evening arranged by Virgil Fox (1912-1980), one of the three organists that dedicated our "Phoenix" Aeolian-Skinner in 1959. He had both a prodigious technique as well as a theatrical flair.

Just as I Am is set to the tune WOODWORTH, which was composed by American William B. Bradbury (1816-1868) in 1849. He also composed the children's hymn *Jesus Loves Me, This I Know*. The text is by Charlotte Elliot (1789-1871), who was British. Sadly, she was frail and sickly most of her life, which makes her text especially poignant and personal. This hymn is often associated with altar calls in revivals.

What Wondrous Love Is is another truly great and uniquely American hymn. Neither the author or composer of the tune, WONDROUS LOVE or CHRISTOPHER, is known, and it was first published in *Southern Harmony*, in the same early 19th century era as the Sacred Harp. Musically, it has both a spiritual slow swing and an open harmony with very few major chords.

Abide with Me - After preaching the last sermon of his career in 1847, Rev. Henry F. Lyte (1793-1847), gave a copy of this hymn text to a relative. Lyte died two months later. The hymn tune, composed near the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 by William H. Monk (1823-1889), has made this hymn one of the most popular since its composition. Moses Hogan continued and amplified the great tradition of spiritual arrangement that includes William Dawson. He recorded a number of compact discs and did solo arrangements for singers like Kathleen Battle. He was commissioned by St. Pauls to write a piece, *I Got a Home in-a Dat Rock*, in honor of Ron McCowan's 25 years of service to this congregation.

There Is a Balm in Gilead was arranged for choir by William L. Dawson (1898-1990). He was choral director for many years at the Tuskegee Institute of Alabama. He was responsible, along with others of his generation, like Hall Johnson, for making beautiful arrangements of spirituals that spread the performance and popularity of that music within and beyond the African American community. Tuskegee Choir gained international stature under Dr. Dawson's leadership.

In the Cross of Christ I Glory is a text written in 1825 by John Bowring (1792-1872). He was an English Unitarian and became a member of Parliament. His text is decidedly Christian. RATHBURN was composed in 1851 by Ithamar Conkley (1815-1867). Conkley was an American of Scottish descent. He became a professional bass and also organist in New York City.

Our postlude, ***Toccata in E Minor***, was composed by Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706). Pachelbel is not well known outside music circles, but his compositions, especially for organ and choir, provided a deep foundation for German composers in the following generation like Bach and his contemporaries. His best known work is his *Canon*, which achieved popularity in the last several decades.

TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Clergy: Matt Fitzgerald, Liz Nickerson, Jeff Carlson

Music Director: Kurt R. Hansen

Organist: Kevin Dzierzawski

Lay Liturgical Administrator: Kevin O'Brien

Head Usher: Beatrice Jaji

Ushers: David Baker, Doug Clark

Gatekeeper: Dodd Brown

Camera Operators: Jim Alrutz, Marie Ankenman, Bob Ball, Jose Cruz, Brian Hafner

Custodian: Ramiro Gonzalez

LENT & EASTER AT ST. PAULS

TUES,
MAR 7, 14, 21 THE GOD OF TELEVISION: *LEANING TOWARD THE LIGHT* - 6:30 p.m.
Soup, TV, conversation, please RSVP

TUES, MAR 28 LENTEN TAIZÉ - 7 p.m.
Service of meditation and prayer

SUN, APRIL 2 PALM SUNDAY - 10 a.m.
Palm branches, songs

THU, APRIL 6 MAUNDY THURSDAY - 7 p.m.
Dinner Church, please RSVP

FRI, APRIL 7 GOOD FRIDAY - 7:30 p.m.
Communion, Tenebrae with choir

SUN, APRIL 9 EASTER SUNDAY - 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.
Communion, choir, brass

ABOUT ST. PAULS

Making a Joyful Sound in the City!

St. Pauls UCC has a vibrant history in the city of Chicago. Founded in 1843, we are one of the city's oldest churches. In 1989, we became one of America's first congregations to declare ourselves "Open and Affirming" of LGBTQ+ people.

From founding Chicago's largest provider of social services to at-risk children to starting a home for the elderly, from housing protestors at the 1968 Democratic Convention to hosting Lincoln Park's first MLK day march against violence on Chicago's streets, we are proud to make a joyful sound in the city.

Most important, over the past 179 years we are glad to have introduced thousands of children and adults to the amazing, inclusive, life changing, uplifting love of God. We do so in worship that is traditional, but far from conventional.

Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald, mfitzgerald@spucc.org

Associate Pastor Jeff Carlson, jcarlson@spucc.org

Associate Pastor Liz Nickerson, lnickerson@spucc.org

For a complete list of St. Pauls Staff, Governance, and Lay Leadership
Please visit www.spucc.org/contact

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WELCOME TO SAINT PAULS UCC!

Welcome to those whose hearts are on fire with faith,
and to those who bring their doubt inside our doors.

Welcome to our first time guests and
our longtime members.

Welcome to single people, tiny children,
grandparents and families of all configurations.

Welcome to those who rejoice and to those who grieve.

Welcome to each and to everyone.

We are an Open and Affirming church.

We welcome all.

We are blessed by your presence and
we are glad you are here.