

**Churchland Baptist Church**  
**Worshiping God on Ash Wednesday – the Beginning of the Season of Lent**  
**February 17, 2021**

Setting the Space.....Dan Koger

Chiming of the Hour.....Dan Koger

*Three chimes are sounded, awakening us to the presence of God,  
alerting us to the voice of Christ, centering us in the embrace of the Spirit.*

Preparing for Worship.....Dan Koger

*(Psalm 46:10a - “Be still and know that I am God”)*

Be still and know that I am God  
Be still and know that I am  
Be still and know that I  
Be still and know that  
Be still and know  
Be still and  
Be still  
Be

Prelude.....Just as I am.....William B. Bradbury

*Joan John, Piano*

Call to Worship.....Greg and Laura Flick

We are invited...

**Into the story, into this place, into this time 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.**

Hymn – “Come and Find the Quiet Center” .....BEACH SPRING

Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:  
clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see  
all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,  
making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,

raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,  
let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:  
there's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,  
in the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare!

Call to Confession.....Dan Koger

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.

Prayer of Confession.....Kim Miller and Dan Koger

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.**

Visual Reflection – “Remember That You are Dust”

From Dust to Dust.....Dan Koger

*(using the charcoal cross or whatever you have that symbolizes ashes)*

*“You are dust...and to dust you shall return.”(Genesis 3:19b)*

Words of Forgiveness.....Kim Miller and Dan Koger

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.**

Prayer for Illumination.....Leslie Koger

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.

Gospel Lesson from Matthew 6.....Kim Miller

“Be careful that you don't practice your religion in front of people to draw their attention. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

“Whenever you give to the poor, don't blow your trumpet as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets so that they may get praise from people. I assure you, that's the only reward they'll get. But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that you may give to the poor in secret. Your Father who sees what you do in secret will reward you.

“When you pray, don't be like hypocrites. They love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners so that people will see them. I assure you, that's the only reward they'll get. But when you pray, go to your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees what you do in secret will reward you.

“When you pray, don't pour out a flood of empty words, as the Gentiles do. They think that by saying many words they'll be heard. Don't be like them, because your Father knows what you need before you ask. Pray like this:

Our Father who is in heaven, uphold the holiness of your name. Bring in your kingdom so that your will is done on earth as it's done in heaven. Give us the bread we need for today. Forgive us for the ways we have wronged you, just as we also forgive those who have wronged us. And don't lead us into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

“If you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don't forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your sins.

“And when you fast, don't put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They distort their faces so people will know they are fasting. I assure you that they have their reward. When you fast, brush your hair and wash your face. Then you won't look like you are fasting to people, but only to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Stop collecting treasures for your own benefit on earth, where moth and rust eat them and where thieves break in and steal them. Instead, collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don't eat them and where thieves don't break in and steal them. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Meditation..... We are Invited In .....Dan Koger

Preparing for Communion – “Change My Heart, O God”

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true  
Change my heart, O God, may I be like You.

You are the potter, I am the clay  
Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true  
Change my heart, O God, may I be like You.

May I be like you.

Invitation to Communion.....Dan Koger

In the light of your love, our failings are illuminated - our failure to give, our failure to love, our failure to follow, our failure to serve, our failure to be the people you would have us be. Forgive us and renew us. Enfold us in your arms, once again, that we might daily know your forgiveness and healing love.

*The Bread of Life and The Cup of Love*

Affirmation of Faith.....Kim Miller

**We believe in an inviting God, who invites the poor and the sick, the outcast and the lonely, the immigrant and the refugee, The awkward and the abrasive, the young and the innocent. We believe God invites the best and the worst in all of us.**

**We believe God invites us to: a life of faith, a crowded table, a messy church, a deeper truth, a resilient joy, a place to belong, a family among strangers, a world that is just, and a love that knows no bounds.**

**We believe this invitation exists for all people. We believe this invitation exists for us. And when we miss the call or ignore the invite, we believe that God invites us again. Thanks be to God for that invitational Spirit. Amen.**

Prayer.....Kim Miller

God of open doors, open arms, and open conversations, we know deep in our souls that you are forever inviting us in. Again and again, You invite us to take another step closer, another step deeper, another step further, in this journey of faith. So with your invitation in our hands, we pray for strength and wisdom. Show us the next right step in this journey. We are here. You are here. This is holy ground. May this holy Lenten journey begin Once again. Gratefully we pray. Amen.

Hymn – “O God, As We Pause”.....ST. DENIO

*(sung to the tune of "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise")*

O God, as we pause from our usual ways,  
as millions stay home, as we count passing days,  
may we learn what matters — what really has worth.  
May we seek your reign as we live here on earth.

May we find your blessings in small, common things;

may we learn the joy that community brings.  
In loving our neighbors, in stopping to pray,  
may we know your presence in each passing day.

So, turn us around, Lord, to make your world new;  
May we seek, in all things, to first follow you.  
In change and in sorrow may we seek your reign.  
O God, in our pausing, restore us again!

*(words by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette)*

A Charge & Benediction.....Dan Koger

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.