



## Ash Wednesday

### \* Poem of Blessing

*“Those Stars That Turn In Us”* by Jan Richardson

I do not know  
how to keep it all together  
or by what patterns  
this world might  
finally hold.

What I know is that  
our hearts are bigger  
than this sky  
that wheels above us

and what shines  
through all this darkness  
shines through us,  
setting every shattered thing  
into a new constellation

and we can  
turn our faces  
to that light,  
to the grace  
of those stars  
that turn in us.

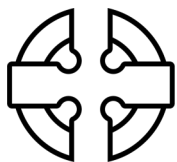
### FISH Service Readers:

Tony Schauffler

Jillian Rounsville

Lily Stone

Garin Stone



STATE COLLEGE  
**PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**

Reed Dressler, Director of Youth Ministry

Allison Maus, Associate Pastor in Campus and Young  
Adult Ministries

John Porter, Interim Pastor

### Gathering and Welcome

#### \*Hymn No. 401

*“Gather Us In”*

#### \*Poem of Confession and Assurance

Leader:

“Many of us walk the earth as strangers to  
ourselves,  
Not knowing what is true, why we feel  
what we feel,  
Actively working to repress experiences or  
ideas that are  
Too jarring for us to observe and release.  
It is a paradox  
Occurring in the human mind: we run  
away from what  
We do not want to face, from what brings  
feelings of  
Pain, and from problems we don’t have  
answers to,  
But in our running away from ourselves  
we are also  
Running away from our own freedom.

It is through the observation of all that we  
are and  
Accepting what we observe with honesty  
and without  
Judgment that we can release the tension  
that creates  
Delusions in the mind and walls around  
the heart. This  
Is why the keys to our freedom lie in our  
darkness:  
Because when we observe our darkness by  
bringing our  
Light of awareness inward, the ego begins  
to dissipate  
Into nothingness and the subconscious  
slowly becomes  
Understood.

All:

**The mind is full of shadows, but  
shadows cannot Withstand the patience and  
perseverance of light—our Minds can become  
like stars, powerful united fields of Pure  
light. But unlike a star, the healed mind will  
dwell In awareness and wisdom.**

*“Many of us walk the earth as strangers to ourselves,”*  
by yung pueblo  
Excerpt from “inward” (pg 10)

**First Scripture Reading:** *Psalm 19:1-6*

**First Poem of Reflection**

*"Everything that was broken"* by Mary Oliver

"Everything that was broken has forgotten its brokenness. I live now in a sky-house, through every window the sun. Also your presence. Our touching, our stories. Earthly and holy both. How can this be, but it is. Every day has something in it whose name is forever."

**First Time of Reflection:**

How does the grandeur of the universe move you?

**\*Hymn No. 626**

*"As the Deer"*

**Second Scripture Reading:** *Ecclesiastes 3:18-20*

**Second Poem of Reflection**

*"Life Expectancy"* by Billy Collins

On the morning of a birthday that ended in a zero,  
I was looking out at the garden when it occurred to me that the robin on her worm-hunt in the dewy grass had a good chance of outliving me, as did the worm itself for that matter if he managed to keep his worm-head down.

It was not always like this.  
For decades, I could assume that I would be around longer than the squirrel dashing up a tree or the nightly raccoons in the garbage, longer than the barred owl on a branch, the ibis, the chicken, and the horse,

longer than four deer in a clearing and every creature in the zoo except the elephant and the tortoise, whose cages I would hurry past.  
It was just then in my calculations that the cat padded noiselessly into the room,  
and it seemed reasonable,

given her bright eyes and glossy coat,  
to picture her at my funeral,  
dressed all in black, as usual,  
which would nicely set off her red collar,  
some of the mourners might pause in their grieving to notice,  
as she found a place next to a labradoodle in a section of the church reserved for their kind.

**Second Time for Reflection:**

How do humans and other animals relate to God?

**Imposition of Ashes**

**\*Song** *"Sundays Palms are Wednesday's Ashes"*

**Poem of Invitation**

*Ambassador of the Cosmos* by Thich Nhat Hahn

"When I hold a piece of bread, I look at it, and sometimes I smile at it. The piece of bread is an ambassador of the cosmos offering nourishment and support. Looking deeply into the piece of bread, I see the sunshine, the clouds, the great earth. Without the sunshine, no wheat can grow. Without the clouds, there is no rain for the wheat to grow. Without the great earth, nothing can grow. That is why the piece of bread that I hold in my hand is a wonder of life. It is there for all of us. We have to be there for it."

**Communion**

**Invitation**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Breaking of Bread**

**Sharing of Cup**

In person: Communion will be shared while we remain seated in the pews

Online: Take a moment to gather elements that can serve as the bread and the cup. Even if it is simply a cracker and a cup of water, the Holy Spirit is at work and grace is present.

**Prayer**

**Song**

*"Unafraid"* by Matthew Beck  
Led by FISH