# FRIENDS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

*An Open & Affirming Congregation*

**Ash Wednesday, Art Siegel, 2006 (San Francisco)**

March 2, 2022
7:00 am

## WELCOME

We are honored that you have chosen to spend your Sunday morning with us. Friends Congregational Church is an **Open & Affirming** congregation of the United Church of Christ. We welcome all people into the full life and ministry of our church—people of all ages, races, sexual orientations, gender identities, and abilities. No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

QUOTE FOR MEDITATION:
*"Soil is the recombinant and regenerative matrix out of which all terrestrial life comes, and to which it eventually returns."*
--Norman Wirzba, From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving Our World

*"Ash Wednesday is full of joy...The source of all sorrow is the illusion that of ourselves we are anything but dust."*
–Thomas Merton

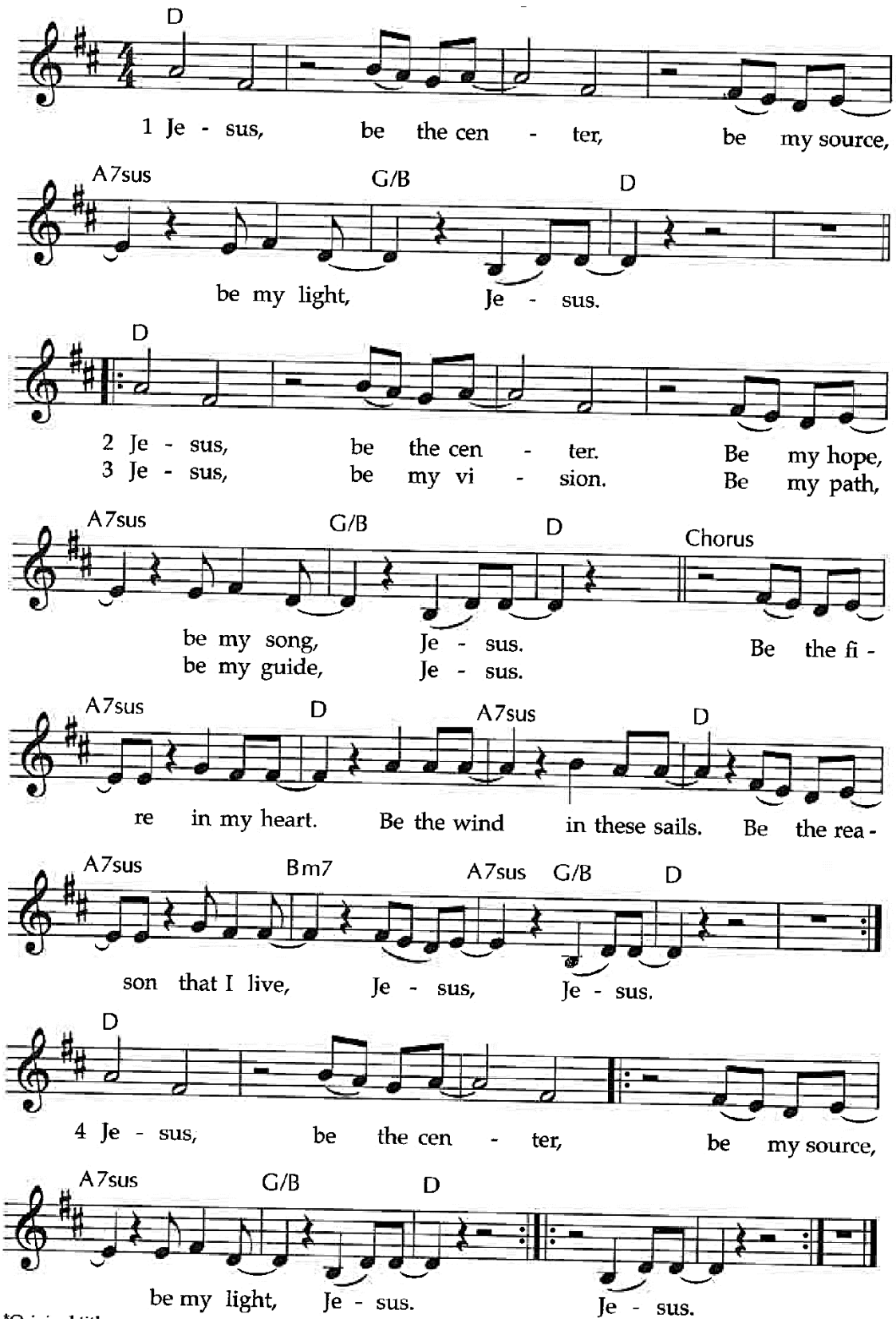
LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

WORDS OF WELCOME Dan De Leon

**CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Genesis 2:7; 3: 19 Psalm 104: 29-30; John 1:18) Dan De Leon

One: Friends and neighbors, in the middle of our busy week, we pause to observe Ash Wednesday together as a faith community.
**All: We come to remember that God made us from fragile, blessed dust and breathes through us the breath of life and love.**
One: From dust we are created in God's image and to God's good dust we shall return.
**All: With dust and oil we claim the mark of God's beloved creature.**
One: Today we begin our 40-day Lenten journey to discover who we are created to be as God's beloved.
**All: In daily practices of prayer and service we will embark upon this Lenten journey.**
One: We follow Jesus, God's Beloved Child, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, in whom we see God's image most clearly.
**Many: So, come, let us pray for strength and imagination to follow Jesus wherever he will lead us this Lent.**

**OPENING SONG – Jesus, be the Center, Sing the Story hymn 31




**INVOCATION Brooke Dooley

PSALM READING: Psalm 51:1-17, NRSV Brooke Dooley

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgement. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 58: 1-12, CEB Trent Williams

Shout loudly; don't hold back; raise your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their crime, to the house of Jacob their sins. They seek me day after day, desiring knowledge of my ways like a nation that acted righteously, that didn't abandon their God. They ask me for righteous judgments, wanting to be close to God. "Why do we fast and you don't see; why afflict ourselves and you don't notice?" Yet on your fast day you do whatever you want, and oppress all your workers.

You quarrel and brawl, and then you fast; you hit each other violently with your fists. You shouldn't fast as you are doing today if you want to make your voice heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I choose, a day of self-affliction, of bending one's head like a reed and of lying down in mourning clothing and ashes?

Is this what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Isn't this the fast I choose: releasing wicked restraints, untying the ropes of a yoke, setting free the mistreated, and breaking every yoke?

Isn't it sharing your bread with the hungry and bringing the homeless poor into your house, covering the naked when you see them, and not hiding from your own family? Then your light will break out like the dawn, and you will be healed quickly. Your own righteousness will walk before you, and the Lord's glory will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and God will say, "I'm here." If you remove the yoke from among you, the finger-pointing, the wicked speech; if you open your heart to the hungry, and provide abundantly for those who are afflicted, your light will shine in the darkness, and your gloom will be like the noon.

The Lord will guide you continually and provide for you, even in parched places. He will rescue your bones. You will be like a watered garden, like a spring of water that won't run dry. They will rebuild ancient ruins on your account; the foundations of generations past you will restore. You will be called Mender of Broken Walls, Restorer of Livable Streets.

INVITATION TO CONFESSION Trent Williams

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (**Unison**)

**God of love and mercy, we come to you in prayer, seeking to change our hearts and minds. We confess the baggage of idols, bitterness, and self-concern that we so often drag along with us, struggling under its weight all the while we attempt to follow Christ. Cleanse us from our attachment to these old things. Burn away their power in us and purify our hearts. In place of old ways fill us with the new fire of your Holy Spirit. Open up new opportunities for us to follow Jesus in loving you and our neighbors. In Jesus' name we ask these things. Amen.**

SILENT PRAYER AND MEDITATION

*One chime will call us into silence, and two chimes will call us out of silence.*

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE (**responsive**)

One: With the whole church,

**All: We affirm that we are made in God's image, befriended by Christ, empowered by the Spirit.**

One: With people everywhere,

**All: We affirm God's goodness at the heart of humanity, planted more deeply than all that is wrong.**

One: With all creation,

**All: We celebrate the miracle and wonder of life, the unfolding purposes of God, forever at work in ourselves and the world.**

SUNG RESPONSE: No. 283 “Spirit of the Living God” - Iverson

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;**
**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**
**Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.**
**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

**PASSING OF THE PEACE — Brooke Dooley

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.
**Many: And also with you!**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/HOPES FOR THE LENTEN SEASON — Dan De Leon

THE LORD’S PRAYER — Dan De Leon

**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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.**
**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**
**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION — Brooke Dooley, Trent Williams

# FRIENDS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Our Vision:**

*Rooted in the way of Christ, we strive to be a community of God's radical inclusion and extravagant welcome.*

**Our Mission:**

*United by the example of Jesus, we live faithfully, love limitlessly, and serve boldly.*

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00am In-Person – 11:00am In-Person & Online

FRIENDS CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Dan De Leon *he/him/his, Senior Pastor*
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