

Sermon for Ash Wednesday 2022
Trinity on the Hill Episcopal Church
Los Alamos, New Mexico
The Rev. Canon Raymond Raney

Joel 2:1-2,12-17
Psalm 103
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

This is a day of ashes when a cross is smudged on our foreheads to remind us “you are dust and to dust you shall return.”

This would seem to be a statement of how low we are in the way of things, but there’s more to us and more to the dust from which we are created.

We are the recipients of the dust of creation – inheritors of the billions of years of evolution from the beginning when God created the Universe exploding out of hydrogen atoms from one dense moment.

Eventually those hydrogen atoms coalesced to form nebulae that fueled the formation of stars and planets, and in the fullness of time – all that we see around us and we ourselves. Everything that exists is born of stardust.

The First Peoples had it right: The stars really are our ancestors.

Everything that was, everything that is, everything that will be – is dust.

As Dust, We are all connected – rocks and trees, plants and animals, water and air – here and to the ends of the universe.

We come from dust, and to the dust we shall return. God's earth was here before us, and it will be here after us. It is not ours. We don't get to pretend it belongs to us, or that it is here for us to destroy and use up.

But we do get to explore it. We get to enjoy it. And we are called to protect it from ourselves. When we fail in that duty, we are called once more, to repent and to try again.

So today, remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

And as you remember, rejoice, and act like you are as special as the stardust from which you were created.

Inspired by: <https://Episcopalclimateneeds.com>