



March 5, 2025

A Note from Pastor Jon and Poet Jan Richardson

**Dear Friends,**

**Blessing the Dust — A Blessing for Ash Wednesday**  
by Jan Richardson

All those days  
you felt like dust,  
like dirt,  
as if all you had to do  
was turn your face  
toward the wind  
and be scattered  
to the four corners

or swept away  
by the smallest breath  
as insubstantial –

did you not know  
what the Holy One  
can do with dust?

This is the day  
we freely say  
we are scorched.

This is the hour  
we are marked  
by what has made it  
through the burning.

This is the moment



we ask for the blessing  
that lives within  
the ancient ashes,  
that makes its home  
inside the soil of  
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked  
not for sorrow.  
And let us be marked  
not for shame.  
Let us be marked  
not for false humility  
or for thinking  
we are less  
than we are  
but for claiming  
what God can do  
within the dust,  
within the dirt,  
within the stuff  
of which the world  
is made  
and the stars that blaze  
in our bones  
and the galaxies that spiral  
inside the smudge  
we bear.

—Jan Richardson from *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons* (Wanton  
Gospeller Press, 2015).

© Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com.

We are not marked for sorrow and shame or false humility but for the realization of what the Creator can do with dust. Makes me rethink — “Made a little lower than the angels,” as Psalm 8:5 says. As I rethink, I remember who God is, who we are, and how even though we are from dust and to dust we shall return, we are worthy and loved.

While Ash Wednesday (today) is also a reminder of our mortality, we can do a pretty good job of convincing ourselves that we’ll live forever, and driving out the thought in our day-to-day lives that our time here is limited and that none of us is making it out of here alive.



There is a Latin expression, *Memento Mori* — “remember that you will die” — that while haunting is also helpful. When we think daily on our own mortality we keep constantly before us the gift and preciousness of this life, of our lives, and the lives of all creation. As the writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us, “It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart” (Ecclesiastes 7:2).

Hopefully today and in this season we can all remember what’s truly important.

Pastor Jon



The Rev. Jon Osmundson  
Associate Pastor  
[josmundson@hilliardumc.org](mailto:josmundson@hilliardumc.org)  
614.876.2403 (church office)  
<https://hilliardumc.org/people/jon-osmundson/>

