

**"All are from the dust,
and to dust all return."**

Ecclesiastes 3:20, ESV



Ash Wednesday Service

THE OCCASSION

Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter: we confront our own mortality and confess our sin before God within the community of faith. The form and content of the service focuses on the dual themes of sin and death in the light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ.

The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship, and the Imposition of Ashes can be a powerful nonverbal and experiential way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation. This practice is the historic focus of Ash Wednesday observance and gave the day its name.

THE GREETING

Pastor: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

People: **God's mercy endures forever.**

THE HYMN

"Have Thine Own Way Lord"

1. Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way! Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.	4. Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way! Hold o'er my being absolute sway. Fill with thy Spirit till all shall see Christ only, always, living in me!
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THE OPENING PRAYER

Prayed by the Pastor

We return to you, O God, in this solemn assembly of elders and children, women and men, clergy and laity, asking you to bless us in this Lenten season and spare all your people. Lead us in the way of truth to the joy of your salvation, and uphold us with willing spirits...

THE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

In Unison, with a Penitent Attitude

We come to you, O God, as an unfaithful people. We have sinned against you and done much that is evil in your sight. The shadows of sin dominate us, and our secret faults separate us from the light and knowledge of your presence. Have mercy on us, blot out our transgressions, forgive our iniquity, and remember our sin no more. Purge us and we will be clean, wash us and we will be purer than new fallen snow. Grant us, O God, a new and right Spirit. **AMEN!**

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

THE HYMN

"Alas And Did My Savior Bleed"

1. Alas! and did my Savior bleed, and did my Sovereign die? Would he devote that sacred head for sinners such as I?	Refrain: At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light, and the burden of my heart rolled away; it was there by faith I received my sight, and now I am happy all the day.
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THE INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE

Read by the Pastor

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

The early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation. During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism, a time of intense Prayer took place, Fasting and Sacrifice was practiced, and it was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church. In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of Christ and His Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word. To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now bow before our Creator and Redeemer.

THE THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES

Prayed by the Pastor

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **AMEN!**

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

The ministers take their places in front of the congregation and with word or gesture invite the congregation to come forward. The leaders dip a thumb in the ashes and make a cross on the forehead of each person. Then the recipient of the cross shall kneel at the Altar to Pray.

The Ministers Say: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Repent, and believe the gospel.

— **KNEEL AT THE ALTAR FOR PERSONAL PRAYERS OF CONFESSION & REPENTANCE** —

THE CONFESSION & PARDON

Prayed by the Pastor

May the Almighty and Merciful God, who desires not the death of a sinner but that we turn from wickedness and live, accept your repentance, forgive your sins, and restore you by the Holy Spirit to newness of life... Let us Pray as Jesus taught his disciples to pray...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

In Unison

Our Father in Heaven, Holy is Your Name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from the evil one. For the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen!

THE PEACE

Let us offer one another signs of reconciliation and love

THE PRAYER OF BLESSING & BENEDICTION

Minister: Let us pray together ...

***All:* Merciful God, share with us your promises and your prescriptions, for we need both the reassurance of your steadfast love, and your call to responsible service. In this season we seek reconciliation and renewal! Establish in us those strengths of character that help us to withstand evil and endure hardships for the sake of the gospel. In you we live and rejoice and have everything we need... Lead us now... AMEN!**