



ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday is one of the most serious and solemn days in the Christian year. The mood is one of penitence and reflection on the quality of our faith and life. Its goal is participation in the Lenten discipline, which prepares us for the Easter celebration. .

Ashes are prepared by burning palm branches and grinding them into a fine powder. The imposition of ashes is an ancient tradition of the Christian Church, reaching back to the first centuries after Christ. For a while the use of ashes was dropped from Protestant worship because it was feared that they were being used to parade people's piety. Realizing that ashes are indeed richly symbolic, their use was reintroduced into our liturgy.

Worshippers who so desire may receive the mark of the cross on their foreheads with the ashes. The ashes symbolize judgment and repentance. The words "Remember you are dust and to dust you will return" forcefully highlight this truth.

The ashes also suggest cleansing and renewal. In ancient times, ashes were used when soap was unavailable. As we begin our Lenten discipline with the ashes on our forehead, we witness our commitment to let this Lenten season be a time of spiritual renewal for us.

The ashes are imposed on worshipper's foreheads during the confession. For those who find this symbol meaningful, please come forward as you would for communion to receive the ashes. The imposition of ashes is a worship opportunity, not a required action. Follow the directions of the ushers.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING LITANY:

L: Our sin rests heavy on our hearts,

C: Free us, O Lord, from this burden.

L: Our sin stands before us and obscures our vision.

C: Move us, O Lord, that we may see.

L: Our sin has left a painful mark on our souls.

C: Wash us, O Lord, and make us clean.

L: Our sin has robbed us of the joy of living.

C: Forgive us, O Lord, and restore our joy.

L: As we bear this cross of ashes today, O Lord, help us remember that you bore a cross of pain.

C: Remind us, O Lord, again and again, that we are yours.

OPENING SONG: “Savior, When in Dust to You” verses 1 & 4

THE CONFESSION:

L: Brothers and Sisters: We were created to experience joy in communion with God, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we sadden our Father, who does not desire us to come under judgment, but to repent and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from the love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love - the disciplines of Lent - help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking God for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination.)

L: Most holy and merciful Father:

C: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

L: We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

C: Have mercy on us, Lord,

L: We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit. .

C: Have mercy on us, Lord.

L: We confess to you, Lord, our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

C: We confess to you, Lord.

L: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

C: We confess to you, Lord.

L: Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

C: We confess to you, Lord.

L: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

C: We confess to you Lord.

L: Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

C: Accept our repentance, Lord.

L: For false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

C: Accept our repentance, Lord.

L: For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

C: Accept our repentance, Lord.

L: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

C: Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen.

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Silence for Meditation and Reflection

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY:

L: God of grace, God of compassion, God of mercy, allow us this day to approach you, though our lives are marked by failure, and with your grace, and mercy, and compassion, help us to find peace.

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 51:1-17 (*read responsively*)

L: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

C: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

L: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

C: 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 judgment.

L: Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

C: You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

L: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

C: Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

L: Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

C: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

L: Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

C: Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

L: Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

C: Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

L: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

C: For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

L: The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

THE GOSPEL: Matthew 6:16-18; 30-34 (from "The Message")

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ "When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don't make a production out of it. It might turn you into a small-time celebrity but it won't make you a saint. If you 'go into training' inwardly, act normal outwardly. Shampoo and comb your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face. God doesn't require attention-getting devices. He won't overlook what you are doing; he'll reward you well.

30-33 “If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don’t you think he’ll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I’m trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with *getting*, so you can respond to God’s *giving*. People who don’t know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don’t worry about missing out. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

34 “Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.

REFLECTION: “*Dust is Not the End of the Story*” *Pastor David Schoob*

SONG: “*Lord Whose Love in Humble Service*” v. 1 & 4

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

C: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

THE CLOSING SONG: “Just as I Am”

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Just As I Am, Without One Plea. Text: Charlotte Elliott. Music: William Bradbury. Public Domain.

OUR *Welcome* IS WIDE OPEN

Skeptic. Cynic. Certain. Believer. Confident. Fearful. Doubter. Seeker. Questioner. Latino. Black. Asian. White. Indigenous. Immigrant. Any combination of ethnic or racial identities. Female. Male. Straight. Gay. Bisexual. Transgender. Questioning. Rich. Poor. Middle-class. Barely making it. Able bodied. Specially abled. Disabled. Young. Old. In-between. Married. Single. Divorced. Awaiting trial. Served time. On probation. Tired. Worn. Hopeful. Employed. Unemployed. Workaholic. Slacker. Anxious. Depressed. Confused. Centered. Inked. Pierced. Both. Life long follower of Jesus. Regular attender. Occasional attender. Curious onlooker. Don't quite fit the box. Need a prayer right now. **Trinity is a faith community where we believe in God's love, grace and mercy—illustrated most clearly through Jesus Christ. We believe we are all children of God, created in God's image and equal in God's sight. We believe God loves us just as we are and way too much to let us stay this way. We are called to live in God's light and be transformed, not through judgment but through unconditional love. We believe God's love is all-inclusive and is stronger than the pressure to be perfect regardless of whatever labels we carry. Saint. Sinner. Democrat. Republican. Independent. Libertarian. Green. Socialist. Apolitical. Addicted. Recovering. We don't care what religion or denomination you are. We are all Human. We are all Flawed. We are all Beloved. —You are welcome here.**

COME *as you are.*

TRINITY CONGREGATION WELCOME STATEMENT | MARCH 2017

