

ORDER OF SERVICE ASH WEDNESDAY 2021

The service proceeds unannounced

Revd Adelaide welcomes us and introduces the service

WELCOME

Brothers and sisters in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

By carefully keeping these days, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

Silence is kept

All Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

HYMN – Jesus Lover of my Soul

FROM DUST WE CAME – Opening sentences from May

From dust we came,
To dust we will return
We belong to God

We gather in penitence
We gather in confidence
We belong to God

At the beginning of Lent
At every moment of our lives
We belong to God

HOW CAN I FIND MY WAY BACK – A Prayer for Ash Wednesday led by Ally
O God, where did I go wrong?
How can I find my way back?
I am weighed down by this feeling
That I have failed – you, other people, myself.
My life is a mess

You know my weakness.
You know much better than me:
I can't hide it from you.
How can I bear to face it too?

Guilty as charged –
However much I argue my case.
It's your laws I have broken;
It's your ways I have lost;
It's your word I have chosen not to hear
Over and over again.

O God, where did I go wrong?
How can I find my way back?

HYMN – Forty Days and Forty Nights

A VERY REASONABLE MAN – A dramatic telling of the temptations by Michael, Arek and
Revd Liz

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION – God be In my Head

A TIME OF TURNING AROUND – A prayer of commitment to repentance led by Revd Bennett

Truly dust we are, and to dust we shall return;
And truly yours we are, and to you we shall return.
Help this to be a time of turning round and beginning again.
Through the forty days of Lent, help us to follow you
And to find you: in the discipline of praying
And in the drudgery of caring –
In whatever we deny ourselves,
And whatever we set ourselves to learn or do.
Help us to discover you
In our loneliness and in community,
In our emptiness and in our fulfilment,
In our sadness and our laughter.
Help us to find you when we ourselves are lost.
Help us to follow you on the journey to Jerusalem
To the waving palms of the people's hope,
To their rejection, to the cross and empty tomb.
Help us to perceive new growth amid the ashes of the old.
Help us, carrying your cross, to be signs of your Kingdom
Amen

SILENCE – A period of silence follows in which we are invited via the powerpoint slide, to reflect on our need for repentance. We are invited to say privately the confession that appears on screen

Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love,

and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed,
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. Amen.

At the end of the period of silence, Revd Adelaide says,

Remember you are dust
and to dust you shall return.
Turn away from sin
and be faithful to Christ

IMAGES FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

CHOOSE THIS DAY – A call to commitment led by Revd Adelaide
Choose this day whom you will serve;
We will choose the Living God

The road is narrow that leads to life;
We will walk the way of Christ

Faith is not our holding on;
Faith is letting go

We offer more than words, O God;
We offer you our lives

HYMN – In a world Where People Walk in Darkness

YOUR THOUGHTS ARE NOT OUR THOUGHTS – A Prayer led by Joseph

Glorious God,
Your thoughts are not our thoughts,
Neither are your ways our ways.

You look at the ugliest soul
And see, still unstirred,
The wings of an angel,
We scan the finest of our neighbours,
Anxious to find the flaw.

You view time in the context of eternity,
And so find a place for waiting, for yearning,
Even for suffering, even for dying.
We demand instant results;
And look for tomorrow before savouring today.

You know that only one who suffers
Can ultimately save,
That is why you walk the way of the cross.
We fear that vulnerability
Which defies our power;
That is why we allow for crucifixion.

Your thoughts are not our thoughts,
Neither are your ways our ways.

And yet we know
That your way is the ladder to heaven,
While, left to our own devices,
Our ways slopes downwards to hell.
But we are here,
Not to have our worst confirmed,
But to have our best liberated.

So we pray,
Forgive us what has gone wrong,
Repair in us what is wasted,
Reveal in us what is good.

And nourish us with better food
Than we could ever purchase:
Your word,
Your love,
Your inspiration,
Your daily bread for our life's journey,
In the company of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen

THE DISMISSAL GOSPEL – read by Miriam

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

BE OUR WAY OUR TRUTH OUR LIFE – Closing Prayer led by Ali

Lord Jesus,
Desert dweller,
Help us now,
At this time of Lent,

To accompany you.

If we have grown soft,
Cushioning our lives
With excuses,
Expose us to the toughness
Of your way.

If we have grown lazy,
Cushioning our minds
With easy, thin thoughts,
Expose us to the rigour
Of your truth.

If we have grown comfortable,
Cushioning our living
With satisfaction and success,
Expose us to the challenge
Of your life.

As we walk, God be our way.
As we learn, God be our truth.
As we grow,
God be our life.
We pray in Jesus' name
Amen

THE BLESSING – given by Revd Liz

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN – Amazing Grace

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