



Welcome and God's richest blessings to you all this evening! We have glorious freedom in the New Testament Church to worship God as the Spirit guides and as the needs and opportunities of our context present. We also have been handed a rich heritage in 2000+ years of experience of the believers who have walked before us in the faith. One blessing handed down to us is the annual pattern of the Church Year that helps us celebrate and proclaim the account of Salvation history, that is, His Story. Just as Advent was a time of preparation to rightly receive the Gift of a Savior born in human flesh, so Lent also is intended to be a time of preparation, to help us understand and deeply value the passion (from the Latin *pascha* – suffering) of the Christ, and the magnitude of His victory on Easter.

Ash Wednesday is the traditional beginning of the 40-day season of Lent. In the Bible, ashes were symbolic of one's sorrow and repentance. In this season we follow the Savior's journey from the mount of transfiguration to Mt. Calvary, and from the cross to the empty tomb. It was our sin that caused His need to suffer and die. In repentance we reflect on our Savior's journey and seek to walk with Him for rescue and renewal.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Greeting and Opening Announcements



OPENING HYMN: "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross" B243

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

INSTRUCTION FOR THE BEGINNING OF LENT

Brothers and sisters in Christ, God created us to know joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. By our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment but to turn to him and live. Therefore, God in his mercy has sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take our place under the law, to suffer for us, and to die the death we deserve. God made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.

During the 40 days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the

fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

I invite you, therefore, to confess your sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit yourselves to this struggle. Let us be silent. Let us be still. Let us pause now for a time of reflection and self-examination.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

CONFESSION OF SINS

In the name of our God, to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hidden.

Amen.

I confess that I am by nature sinful.

I am guilty of many sins.

I am distressed by the sins that trouble me.

For all this I am sorry. I pray for forgiveness.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love.

Jesus says to his people, "If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven." His death paid for the guilt of your sins and the sins of the whole world. Do you believe this?

Yes, I believe.

By the authority of Christ, I forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

PRAYER

Almighty and merciful God, you never despise what you have made and always forgive those who turn to you. Create in us such new and contrite hearts that we may truly repent of our sins and obtain your full and gracious pardon; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Those who desire to receive the sign of ashes are invited to come forward at the ushers' direction. Baptized children are welcome to come forward at their parents' discretion.

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

The minister applies ashes to the forehead of each in the form of a small cross, saying:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

After all who desire have received ashes, the minister says:

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation

That we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and suffering of your Son, O Lord,

Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

THE ABSOLUTION

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. As a called servant of Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Joel 2:12-19

¹² "Even now," declares the LORD,
"return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning."

¹³ Rend your heart
and not your garments.

Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.

¹⁴ Who knows? He may turn and relent
and leave behind a blessing—
grain offerings and drink offerings
for the LORD your God.

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion,
declare a holy fast,
call a sacred assembly.

¹⁶ Gather the people,
consecrate the assembly;
bring together the elders,
gather the children,
those nursing at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her chamber.

¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister before the LORD,
weep between the portico and the altar.

Let them say, "Spare your people, LORD.

Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn,
a byword among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"

The LORD's Answer

¹⁸ Then the LORD was jealous for his land
and took pity on his people.

¹⁹ The LORD replied^(a) to them:

"I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil,
enough to satisfy you fully;
never again will I make you
an object of scorn to the nations.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM FOR ASH WEDNESDAY: PORTIONS OF PSALM 51

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

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

Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

PSALM PRAYER

**Lord, we confess our sins to you and plead for your mercy.
We acknowledge that sin runs too deep in our nature for us
ever to rid ourselves of it, but we thank you that Jesus has
done what we could not do, washing us clean of every stain.
We plead that your Spirit would give us the strength to live
a new life; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

GOSPEL READING: Luke 12:13-21

The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

¹⁴ Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" ¹⁵ Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

¹⁶ And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. ¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."

²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

²¹ "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

HYMN OF THE DAY: "The Old Rugged Cross" B244

MESSAGE: Joel 2:12-19

"What Is Your Heart Condition?"

Sermon notes:

Ever seen someone in sackcloth?

Why return to the LORD your God? For he is _____

Age groups/people groups noted in these verses:

Points to ponder:

1. How do I show I trust in God? What can sometimes get in the way?
2. Who can I ask to help me in my faith life—who can I ask to pray with and for me and talk to when things are tough?
3. What can I do to improve my heart condition—to draw closer to my Savior Jesus during this Lenten season?

OFFERING *We joyfully return to God a planned, generous portion of His blessings to us in gratitude for His immeasurable goodness!*

PRAYERS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

Amen.



CLOSING HYMN: "Jesus, Refuge of the Weary"

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