



THE ASHES OF ASH WEDNESDAY

Have you ever wondered what Ash Wednesday is all about? That name was given to this day because of the church's ancient practice of imposing ashes in the form of a cross on the forehead of the worshipers as a sign of personal absolution following public penitence.

Ashes are an extraordinarily rich symbol rooted in ancient customs and practices. In Old Testament times people often covered their heads with ashes as a sign of mourning, grief and humiliation. Ashes have long reminded humanity of our total dependence upon God for life, for one day our earthly bodies shall become in the words of the burial service, "...earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

Ashes also suggest cleansing and renewal. They were once used as a cleansing agent in the absence of soap, and on Ash Wednesday, the ashes have sometimes been understood as a penitential substitute for water as a sign of Baptism. Baptism is a primary emphasis of Lent. Water both stifles and refreshes, drowns and makes alive; so the ashes also tell of both death and renewal.

The first Ash Wednesday Service was held in the sixth century in Gaul. It carried over to the Roman Church and into the Lutheran Church at the time of the Reformation. Not until the turn of the 20th century did the imposition of ashes disappear from Lutheran churches. Beginning with the Lutheran/Roman Catholic dialogues in the early 1960's, Lutherans took a new look at the imposition of ashes. Many Lutheran churches have reintroduced this traditional practice. *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* makes provision for the imposition of ashes as a part of the liturgy for this day.

As disciples of Christ seeking peace and justice in the world, we welcome, affirm, and include all people into the fullness of God's love. We celebrate people of all races, cultures, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical or mental abilities, socioeconomic statuses, appearances, family status and citizenship as equally loved and valued in the eyes of God and in this place. All are invited to join this community as we worship God, grow in faith, and strive to love and serve one another. All, without exception, are welcome in this place.

GATHERING

WORDS OF WELCOME AND AFFIRMATION

Please stand as able

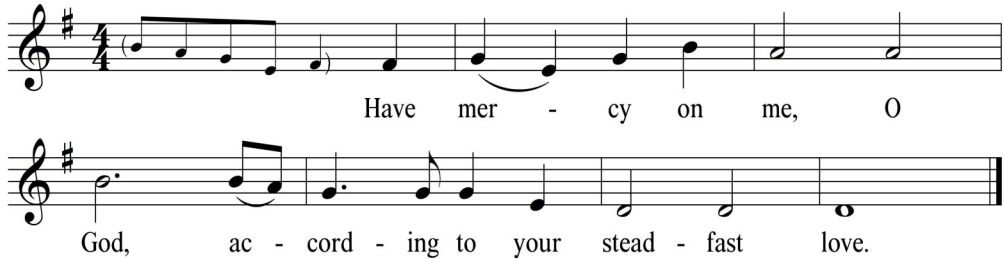
OPENING

The refrain is introduced by the cantor.

Psalm 51:1-17

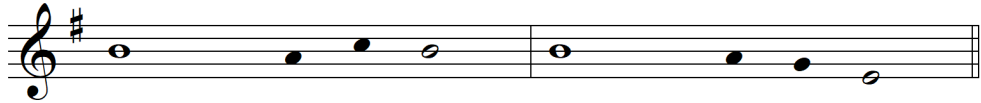
Thereafter, the congregation is invited to sing without introduction.

Psalm
Refrain



Have mer - cy on me, O
God, ac - cord - ing to your stead - fast love.

Psalm
Tone



¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.

²**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,
and cleanse me | from my sin.**

³For I know | my offenses,
and my sin is ev- | er before me.

⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment. R**

⁵Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my | mother's womb.

⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.

⁸**Let me hear | joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken | may rejoice. R**

⁹Hide your face | from my sins,
and blot out | all my wickedness.

- ¹⁰**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- | it within me.**
- ¹¹Cast me not away | from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.
- ¹²**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit. R**
- ¹³Let me teach your ways | to offenders,
and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.
- ¹⁴**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**
- ¹⁵O Lord, o- | pen my lips,
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.
- ¹⁶**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.
You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**
- ¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise. R

GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Please be seated

WORD

READING

Isaiah 58:1-12

A reading from Isaiah.

- ¹Shout out, do not hold back!
Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.
- ²Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

³“Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.

⁴Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹The LORD will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

¹²Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand as able

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.

GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the sixth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from God in heaven. ²"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and God who sees in secret will reward you. "And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to God who is in secret; and God who sees in secret will reward you. ¹⁶"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by God who is in secret; and God who sees in secret will reward you. ¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated

MEDITATION

The Ashes of Remembrance

Please stand as able

**Restore in us, O God, the splendor of your love;
renew your image in our hearts, and all our sins remove.**

**O Spirit, wake in us the wonder of your pow'r;
from fruitless fear unfurl our lives like springtime bud and flow'r.**

**Bring us, O Christ, to share the fullness of your joy;
baptize us in the risen life that death cannot destroy.**

**Three personed God, fulfill the promise of your grace,
that we, when all our searching ends, may see you face to face.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

Most holy and merciful God,

**we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven,
that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault,
in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

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.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We have shut our ears 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.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

INTRODUCTION TO THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

At the very beginning,

God scooped up the dust of the earth and molded it into human beings, breathing divine breath into those creatures of dust.

Over time though, we dust creatures have forgotten who we are and whose we are.

We believed a serpent in the Garden of Eden who said we could become like God.

We believed that the gold calf Aaron made could guide us in the wilderness.

We believed the builders of Babel

who thought by our own hands we could be greater than God.

We have covered up with leaves and clothes.

We have stopped taking time to walk with God in the gardens of the world God created.

But God does not stop finding ways to meet us.

God spoke through a burning bush, a whisper, a cloud pillar, the laws given to Moses, and then ultimately through Jesus Christ.

By living a perfect sinless life,

Jesus exposed our lies of self-sufficiency.

Our sinful pride is brought into the light.

Our dusty nature is right there on the surface.

Come forward to reclaim the dust with which you were formed.

Come forward to recognize your need for the God who created you

and for the savior who desires to wash you clean.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those who would like to participate should come down the middle aisle to the lighted cross.

The Ministers apply ashes to the forehead of each person with the words:

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

After all who desire ashes have received them, the pastor continues.

Please stand as able

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

That we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

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

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Reset your Church, O God. You gather your church and call us to return to you. Accompany us throughout our Lenten journey, convicting your church to repent when we stray and strengthening us to continue flinging wide the doors to your Kingdom. Create in us clean hearts and renew all your people to declare your praise. Hear our prayers and have mercy on us, O God,

according to your steadfast love.

Reset your creation, O God. With the warmth of Spring we will see thorny bushes bloom with beautiful roses and once empty nests protect new life. As the world around awakens, rejuvenate and refresh your creation. Bring healing to damaged ecosystems. Fill rivers, lakes, and streams with fresh water. Create in us a renewed desire to carefully and faithfully steward your creation. Hear our prayers and have mercy on us, O God,

according to your steadfast love.

Reset the nations, O God. Bring about an unstoppable desire for peace. Raise up leaders who are willing to stand for justice even when it is the unpopular stance. Help us to find a way to end gun violence and protect the lives of others as if they are our own. Hear our prayers and have mercy on us, O God,

according to your steadfast love.

Reset your people, O God. Give us renewed ears to finally hear those who cry out but are rarely heard. Renew our hands where they have grown weary, trusting that you are working through us to bring about lasting change. Equip us with compassion to care for those who experience oppression, homelessness, economic hardship, and illness. We pray especially for those we name now on our lips or silently in our hearts ... Hear our prayers and have mercy on us, O God,

according to your steadfast love.

Reset our hearts, O God. As we are marked with ashes, remembering you created us from dust, help us to more fully understand the diversity of the dust from which we are created. You create us in your image, Holy God, using gay dust, black and brown dust, female identifying dust, white male dust, differently abled dust, trans dust, and queer dust. You celebrate this diversity. Hear our prayers and have mercy on us, O God,

according to your steadfast love.

Reset this congregation, O God. Inspire us to find new ways to live as witnesses to your inclusive love, deep mercy, and abiding grace. Continue moving in this place to make space for each of your beloved children to be their most authentic selves. Walk alongside us in our brokenness as we journey toward wholeness. Stand with us in our suffering as you move us toward healing. Hear our prayers and have mercy on us, O God,

according to your steadfast love.

O Lord, our God, we give thanks for all your faithful ones of every time and place. Reset and renew us by the example of their lives of prayer and service, and at the last, bring us with them into your everlasting presence. Hear our prayers and have mercy on us, O God, **according to your steadfast love.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your people, your church, and your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ is with you always.

And also with you.

Please share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

Please be seated

MEAL

OFFERING

To Dust

Adult Choir

Karen Marroli

Let my crying come to dust. Let my grief be turned to ashes.
Let my heart be cleansed with flame. Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

Let my mourning turn to song. Let my sorrow turn to sunrise.
Let my broken spirit rest. Kyrie eleison.

Let your healing waters rise. Let you deserts bloom with bounty.
Let your Holy Spirit come. Christ eleison. (Christ, have mercy.)

Let our crying come to dust. Let our grief be turned to ashes.
Let our hearts be cleansed with flame. Kyrie eleison.

Please stand as able

HYMN

Create in Me a Clean Heart

#188

**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right
spirit within me. Cast me not away from your
presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit.**

Let us pray. God of good gifts,
**receive these and all our offerings
as we present them in faithful service
for the sake of your gospel.
Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal
as you pour out your very presence
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.
Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

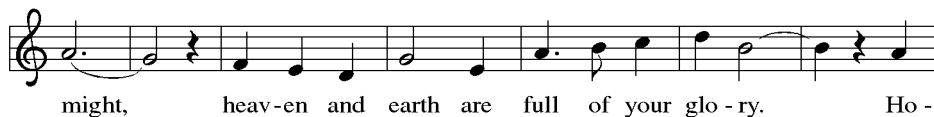
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

**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,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

THE INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The gifts of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God!

Please be seated

COMMUNION

Communion will be administered at the altar.

All, without exception, are welcome at the table of God's grace and love. Anyone preferring not to receive the wine may receive only the bread, completely trusting that the full benefit of communion — Christ's grace and forgiveness — may be found in either the bread or wine.

Gluten free wafers are available.

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

HYMN

I Come with Joy

#482

**I come with joy, a child of God, forgiven, loved, and
free, the life of Jesus to recall in
love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.**

**I come with Christians far and near to find, as all are
fed, the new community of love in
Christ's communion bread, in Christ's communion bread.**

**As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share, each proud division
ends. The love that made us makes us one, and
strangers now are friends, and strangers now are friends.**

**The Spirit of the risen Christ, unseen, but ever
near, is in such friendship better known,
alive among us here, alive among us here.**

**Together met, together bound by all that God has
done, we'll go with joy, to give the world the
love that makes us one, the love that makes us one.**

Refrain

Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.

You are the potter; I am the clay.

Mold me and make me; this is what I pray. *Refrain*

Stand as able

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Embodied God,
at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus.
With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise,
empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors
and touch the world with your love.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

God, the giver of love,
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth
bless you in this Lenten journey.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

On My Heart Imprint Your Image

#811

**On my heart imprint your image, blessed Jesus, king of grace,
that life's troubles nor its pleasures ever may your work erase.**

**Let the clear inscription be: Jesus, crucified for me,
is my life, my hope's foundation, all my glory and salvation!**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve in love.

Thanks be to God.

AT TONIGHT'S WORSHIP

Presiding Minister and Preaching	Susan Crowell
Assisting Minister	Patrick Preacher
Organist/Choir Director	Jim Parham
Cantors	Lani Wise Russ Wise
Acolyte	EmmieMae Peden
Lectors	John Beckford Josh Warner
Ushers	Carol Elliott Calvin Harmon Teresa Harrington David Potts
Greeters	Mark Allen Debbie Farstad Anne Harmon Deirdre Hixson Lani Ludian Dora Welch
Video	Henry Wilcox
Audio	Gregg Alley

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in honor of the Church Staff by
Heather Kleckley.

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