

Ash Wednesday is a mysterious and meditative day. It begins, once again, that ancient season of Lent, aimed at nurturing the spiritual roots of the Christian. Appropriately, our Lenten nurture begins in the rich soil of ashes and dust.

All over the globe people on Ash Wednesday make their way to a church and kneel at the altar rail. The pastor puts his thumb in a container of ashes, the collection of the previous Palm Sunday's burned palm fronds. Ashes are placed in cruciform on the Christian's forehead as the pastor recites... "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The ashes are a reminder, powerful and persuasive, that we live on "borrowed time." As the Prayer Book reminds us, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

But the eye and soul of the Christian sees something more. Deep in the dust there is glory. Hidden in the ashes there is profound life. God is our loving Creator. Humanity is God's greatest, most adored creation. Our creatureliness takes on Godliness. Our "borrowed time" is none other than our potential abundant time, a free gift with God's original blessing. The dust of our days has within it the unmistakable handprint of God. It is a kind of gold dust. And, in the ashes of our mortality, there is profound Mystery and Mercy which we experience. Ashes and dust. It is rich soil for our spiritual roots.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 26, 2020

6:30 p.m.

Introduction: Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent and is so named because of the ancient tradition of placing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful. As far back as the Old Testament (Job 42:6), dust and ashes are symbolic of repentance and confession. More and more Protestant Churches are reinstating the use of ashes as a way of making a statement when words fail.

While we make use of this tradition tonight, please know that you have the option of receiving the ashes. You are encouraged to begin the Lenten Season at the altar of the church.

Prelude: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*.....arr. Robert Hobby

*The Greeting Pastor Paul Shea

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

God's mercy endures forever.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's Holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,

And forget not all God's benefits.

Who forgives all your sins
and heals all your infirmities.

Who redeems your life from the grave,

And crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness.

*The Opening Prayer (Unison) Austen Kewin

Most Holy God, your Son came to save sinners;

We come to this Season of repentance,

confessing our unworthiness,

asking for new and honest hearts,

and the healing power of your forgiveness.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Hymn 510 *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

Scripture Lesson: Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17 Ann McNeill

Scripture Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 Pastor Cindy Oden

*Hymn 435 *What Wondrous Love is This?*

*Gospel Lesson: Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21 Emily Spatcholts

Sermon: *Burning Our Idols* Pastor Wes Oden

Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline

Thanksgiving Over the Ashes

Imposition of Ashes

If you would like a mark of ashes placed upon your forehead as a symbol of your inner repentance and sorrow for sin, please come forward at this time and kneel at the communion rail.

Psalm of Confession: Psalm 51 (Unison) Pastor Jon Cole

Our Response: *Create in Me a Clean Heart*

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me. (Repeat)
Cast me not away from Thy presence, O Lord,
and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation,
and renew a right spirit within me.

The Pastoral Prayer / The Lord's Prayer (debts/debtors)

*Hymn 155 *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

*Benediction (Unison)

**Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery
in which you have given yourself to us.
Grant that we may go into the world
in the strength of your Spirit,
to give ourselves for others,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Postlude: *As the Deer*arr. Robert Hobby

*Please stand if able Judy Congdon, organ