

A SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR ASH WEDNESDAY



GATHERING

GREETING*

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 for ever.

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN

Amazing Grace

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.
3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.
6. When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.

SCRIPTURE LESSON Joel 2:1 -2, 12-17

SCRIPTURE LESSON 2 Corinthians 5:20 b -6:10

GOSPEL LESSON* Matthew 6:1 -6, 16-21

SERMON

Hymn Just As I Am

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
2. Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
3. Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
4. Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
5. Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
6. Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:
the early Christians observed with great devotion
 the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection,
and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration
 there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism.
It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins
and had separated themselves from the community of faith
were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness,
and restored to participation in the life of the Church.
In this way the whole congregation was reminded
of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ
and the need we all have to renew our faith.
I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church,
to observe a holy Lent:
by self-examination and repentance;
by prayer, fasting, and self-denial;
and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.
To make a right beginning of repentance,
and as a mark of our mortal nature,
let us now kneel (bow) before our Creator and Redeemer.

A brief silence is kept, the congregation kneeling or bowed.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.
Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence,
so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift
are we given everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND PARDON

**Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo.
Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has
become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot
change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more
and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

May the almighty and merciful God,
who desires not the death of a sinner
but that we turn from wickedness and live,
accept your repentance, forgive your sins,
and restore you by the Holy Spirit to newness of life. Amen.

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING *
IMPOSITION OF ASHES *

GOING FORTH *