

A BRIEF ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

An Invitation to a Holy Lent

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

From the early days of our faith, Christians have observed the remembrance of Christ's passion and resurrection with great reverence.

It became the custom to prepare for that observance by a season of prayer and fasting, and the reconciliation of those who had been separated from the community of faith.

By keeping the season of Lent, we take to heart God's call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and practice in our daily lives the work of reconciliation.

I invite you, therefore, 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.

To make a right beginning to this season we can receive the mark of ashes as a reminder of our mortal nature and of God's invitation to receive Christ's redeeming work.

Liturgy for Confession and Ashing

Minister God be with you.

All And also with you.

Minister Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, you hate nothing you have made, and forgive the sins of all who are penitent; create in us new and contrite hearts, so that when we turn to you and confess our sins and acknowledge our need, we may receive your full and perfect forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

Prayer over the Ashes

Minister:

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, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

The ashes are imposed with the following words:

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

Psalm 51 (51:1-5, 8-12):

**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.**

Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.

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

Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgment

Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.

Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice.

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

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.

Then the Minister says

Almighty God, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their sin and live, pardons all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe the holy Gospel.

Therefore we ask you, God: Grant us true repentance and your Holy Spirit, that what we do this day may please you, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

Minister The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

May the Lord bless you during this season of Lent and as we look forward to the joy of Easter.

Material taken from the Church of England Common Worship with thanks to 'Ashes To Go'