

Ash Wednesday 2005

The Table is set with a fire bowl in the centre. Palms, symbolising the previous Palm Sunday, are scattered around it. The baptismal font, uncovered and filled with water, is on one side and the Pascal candle on the other.

The congregation gathers in silence.

LITURGY OF GATHERING

God gathers us into the divine communion,
between the light of Christ and the waters of baptism.

Friends in Christ,
every year at the time of the Christian Passover
we celebrate our liberation
through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration
and to renew our life in the paschal mystery.
We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance
and for the love and mercy of God
proclaimed in the gospel of Christ.

The journey towards Easter begins with the sign of ashes,
an ancient symbol that speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human
life, and of the penitence of the community of faith.

I invite all of you, in the name of Christ,
to observe a holy Lent:
by self-examination and penitence
by prayer and by fasting,
by acts of justice and works of love,
and by the measuring of your life by the word of God
read in Scripture.

Let us pray.

Loving Lord
take the lives we bring you today—
frail and uncertain, yet looking to you for mercy and help—
take these lives and make of them signs of your coming kingdom
of peace, justice and love most holy.
Give us courage to walk the way of our Lord to his ugly, hateful, cross,
that we may also share with him in the silent beauty of the
resurrection.

Amen.

Hymn 463 *May this Lenten Discipline*

LITURGY OF WORD AND PENITENCE

Scripture Joel 2.12-18

1st confession Psalm 51 (*sung from 32 in hymnbook*)

Scripture 2 Corinthians 5.20-6.2

2nd confession

The worshippers may kneel.

O God, you have searched us and you know us.
All that we are is open to you.
We confess that we have sinned.



When we are quick to judge our neighbour
but slow to examine ourselves:

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned . . .

When we are happy to confess you among friends
but deny even knowing you when our enemies close in:

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned . . .

When we show great discipline in the pursuit of worldly wealth
but invest neither energy nor enthusiasm to obtain the treasures
of the Spirit.

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned . . .

When we clamour for your crown
but refuse to shoulder your cross:

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned . . .

When we would rather crucify the prophets
than un-weave the web of injustice:

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned . . .

When we demands instant results and instant rewards
and pour scorn those who prefer to wait, to yearn, to suffer,
even to die:

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned . . .

When we have looked for
an easier gospel,
a lighter cross,
a less demanding saviour:

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned . . .

Where can we turn, Lord Jesus, except to you?
We are not able to heal ourselves.
We are not able to forgive ourselves.
We are not able to restore ourselves.
We are not able to sanctify ourselves.
We turn to you, God of Jesus,
for you alone can make us whole.

Gospel

Matthew 6.1-6, 16-18

3rd confession

You are invited to take the piece of paper provided with your order of service and write your own prayer of confession. When you are ready, bring your prayer to the Table to be burned.

As the last of the prayers and palms are burned, all stand to sing the following (TIS 736):

1. *Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, Ky-ri - e e - lei - son,*
 2. *Chris - te e - lei - son, Chris - te e - lei - son,*
 3. *Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, Ky-ri - e e - lei - son,*

1. *Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.*
 2. *Chris - te e - lei - son.*
 3. *Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.*

(Lord, have compassion. Christ, have compassion. Lord, have compassion.)

Quenching of the Ashes with Baptismal Water

Some water from the baptismal font is poured on the last of the fire.

These ashes remind us of our frailty and our mortality.
 The water proclaims the unfathomable mercy of God.

**God our creator,
 you have formed us out of the dust of the earth.
 May these ashes be to us
 a sign of our mortality and penitance,
 so that we may remember
 that it is only by your gracious gift
 that we given everlasting life;
 through Jesus Christ our saviour. Amen.**

The Marking with Ashes

Any who wish to may come forward to receive the ashes while standing or kneeling. The ashes, which mark the sign of the cross, may be received on the forehead or on the back of the hand. They are given with these words:

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

Trust in God's kindness. Christ shall never leave or forsake you.

Song Ashes by Tom Conry & Michael Joncas

1. We rise again from ashes, from the good we've failed to do
 We rise again from ashes, to create ourselves anew
 If all the world is ashes then must our lives be true
 An offering of ashes, an offering to you.
2. We offer you our failures, we offer you attempts
 The gifts not fully given, the dreams not fully dreamt
 Give our stumblings direction, give our visions wider view
 An offering of ashes, an offering to you.
3. Then rise again from ashes, let healing come to pain
 For when the drought is over, we'll welcome back the rain
 The rain we'll use for growing and create the world anew
 From an offering of ashes, an offering to you.
 From an offering of ashes, an offering to you.

THE LITURGY OF EUCHARIST

Invitation

Hear the words of Christ:
 Come to me, all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens,
 for I shall give you rest.
 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
 for I am gentle and humble of heart,
 and you shall find rest for your souls.

Matt 11.28

I am the bread of life.
 Whoever comes to me shall never be hungry,
 and whoever believes in me shall never be thirsty.

John 6.35

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice,

for they shall be filled.

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 truly right to praise you, O God,
for you made us from the dust of the earth,
breathed the breathe of life into us,
and set us amidst the beauty of the world
to love and serve your ways.
We bless you God because
when we rejected your love and ignored your wisdom,
you did not reject us.
You loved us still and called us to turn again to you
in faith and obedience.

Therefore, with the angels and archangels who surround us, with
nomads, apostles and saints, with earth, sea and sky, and the whole
creation, we sing the hymn of unending praise:

Matt 5.6

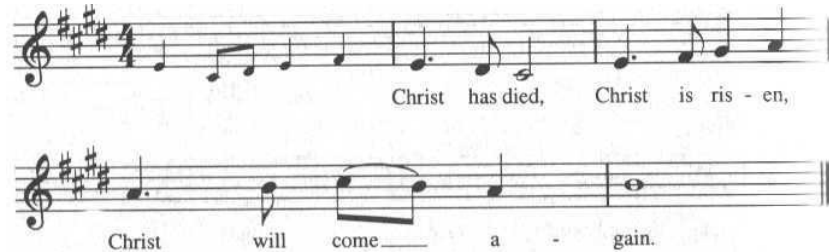


Ho - ly, Ho - ly,
Ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

You are holy, O God of glory,
and blessed is your son Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Out of your great love for the world
you sent Jesus amongst us to show us how to live
and to set us free from the tyranny of evil.
By his life, his death and his resurrection,
he releases us from our bondage to death and decay,
and frees us to live in the freedom of God's children.

With thankful hearts, we remember how Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, took bread . . .

In this way, we celebrate the liberation Jesus won for us.
In this way, we celebrate the mystery of our faith:



Gracious God,
pour out your Holy Spirit upon us
and upon these gifts of bread and wine,
that the bread we break and the cup we bless
may be our communion in the body and blood of Christ.
By your Spirit, unite us with all who are baptised in his name,
that we may be one in ministry,
one body of Christ serving the world.

Lead us, merciful God, to live our Lenten calling with faithfulness:
to live justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.
Fix our eyes on Jesus,
until this mortal life is ended and everything returns to dust.
Give us power to serve you passionately
until the day of resurrection dawns
when all the baptised shall sit at table with you
in the wedding feast of the kingdom.

The Lord's Prayer

Breaking of the bread

Look, Christ is broken for the sin of the world.
Look, Christ is poured out for the healing of the world.
Holy things for holy people.
Glory be to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Communion

Let us receive what we are,
let us become what we receive:
the body of Christ.

Please come forward to receive the bread and the wine.

THE LITURGY OF SENDING

Jesus said:

Whoever would come after me must deny themselves,
take up their cross daily, and follow me.
For whoever would gain his life will lose it.
But whoever loses his life for my sake,
And for the sake of the gospel, will gain it.

Let us affirm our Lenten covenant together:

When God's calls,
we shall listen.

Where God sends,
we shall go.

Where Christ goes before us,
we shall follow.

When the way becomes rough,
we shall call on the Spirit for courage.

When the way becomes dark,
we shall look to Christ for light.

When the way becomes lonely,
we shall lean on our brothers and sisters.

When the way seems impossible,
**we shall not give in,
for nothing is impossible for God.**

Hymn 561 *To be a pilgrim*

Blessing

I wish all of you a blessed and holy Lent.
The blessing of God go with you—
the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—
to aid and enfold you in every hour,

until the dark night is over and the dawn of resurrection is come.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

This liturgy was written by Garry J. Deverell. If you wish to use it in some way,
please ask permission at E: gjdweb@gmail.com. Web: www.deverell.net