

Christ Church Gabriola

A Collaborative Anglican – United Church
Open to All



March 2, 2022

Ash Wednesday

Tears to Hallelujahs: The Lenten Journey Begins

Guest Presider: Rev. Sally Bullas

We acknowledge these lands upon which we worship are the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

*Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*

Note: Have on hand a piece of paper in the shape of a tear drop, a pencil, dried palm leaves if you have them, matches, and a fire-safe bowl.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

One: Come, the light of Christ beckons to us - just as we are.

All: Come, the light of Christ calls to us - asking us to break open our hearts and reveal the wilderness places deep within.

One: Come, for the light of Christ cannot be dimmed no matter how dark the journey.

(candle is lit)

Scripture Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Voice One: Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

Voice Two: Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

Voice One: Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God?

Voice Two: Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

Voice One: Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations.

Voice Two: Why should it be said among the peoples, "Where is their God?"

A Call to Repentance

One: Like the sound of a trumpet or the crack of thunder,
God calls us to return.

All: Return from where?

Where have we been? Where *have* we been?

(pause)

One: Sometimes in the complexity and challenges of life,
it is hard to pause and remember what we are doing.

**All: Let us take a moment to think back over the past week...
or month...or year.**

One: Let us consider what we have done with our time; with our lives,

**All: how we have used our abilities?
how we have spent our money?
what we have done with our energy?**

One: Where has our heart been?

(pause)

One: Like the sound of a trumpet or the crack of thunder,

**All: God calls us to return.
God invites us to come home from wherever we have let
ourselves wander.**

One: Sometimes we have strayed only a little.

Sometimes we have lost our way.

**All: No matter. From wherever we are in our lives,
God calls us to return.**

One: To come home to God who is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.

All: Come, let us return to our God

(pause for silent reflection)

Readying Prayer of Confession

One: God, who creates life, who creates us for life, who is found in the
midst of life,

**All: We acknowledge that we do not match the passion of your
love for us in our love for you, or in our love for one another.**

One: We name our preoccupation with the passing things of this life,
that blots our awareness of your presence within us, and blinds us
to your handiwork round about us.

**All: We confess the shadows in our hearts,
the ambiguity of our works,
the struggles of our consciences,
the ambivalence of our desires,
the duplicities of our choices,
the vacillations of our wills,
the misuse of our powers...**

One: God's mercy is our hope, and so we bring to God:

**All: our tattered faith,
our divided loyalties,
our faltering voices,**

One: and ask for forgiveness,

**All: for healing,
for transformation.**

One: Amen.

An Invitation to Name our Sorrows

One: Let us remember before God the mistakes we have made and the times we have failed to show others our love.

(write your confession on the tear drop piece of paper and burn it in a fire-safe bowl. If dried palm leaves are available, the tear drops can be mixed with burning palm leaves.)

Invocation

One: From the tears of last year's pain,
From the echoes of last year's celebrations,
From the brittleness of last year's good intentions,
come the ashes of our repentance.

(mix a few drops of olive oil with the ashes)

Receiving the Sign of Repentance

One: God of grace and mercy, forgive us for the wrongs we have done to one another and to you.

All: Help us to mend our ways.

**Help us to know your pardon that,
strengthened by your steadfast love,
we may live as you would have us live.**

(dip your finger in the ashes and mark a sign of the cross on the back of your hand or forehead as a sign of repentance)

Words of Assurance

One: God creates in us a clean heart.

All: God puts a new and right spirit in us.

One: As we make our Lenten journey, may God sustain this willing spirit within us.

All: As we journey from the ashes of repentance to the wonder of resurrection, may God restore to us the joy of salvation. Amen.

Blessing

One: Be reconciled to God.

All: This is God's time, the day of salvation.

One: Through all the seasons of your life—
and especially this Lenten season—
may you know the grace of God.

All: Amen.

(candle is extinguished)