

Ash Wednesday

March 5, 2025

We gather in silence

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return."

To remember we are dust is also to remember that in the beginning God created humanity "from the dust of the ground." We are God-formed, God-breathed dust! At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism.

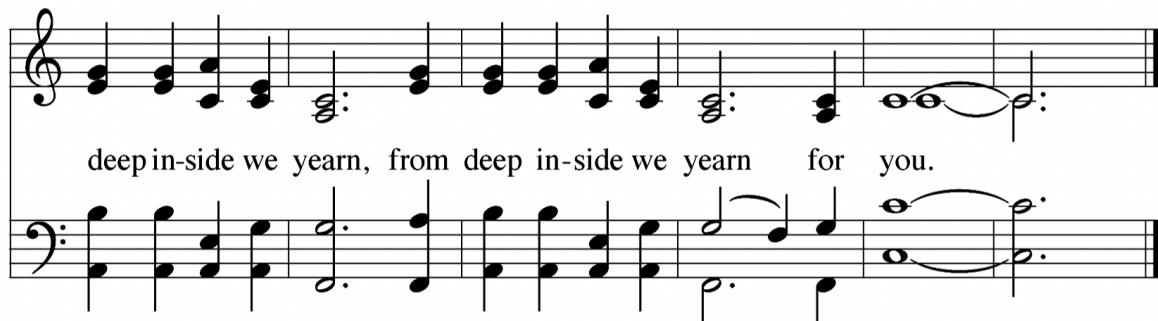
While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ, already created and formed anew in grace. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that "now is the day of salvation." Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

We take a moment to still our hearts before God.

"O God We Call"



O God, we call, O God, we call, from deep in-side we yearn, for you.



O God, we call, O God, we call, from deep in-side we yearn, from deep in-side we yearn, for you.

A word from the prophet Joel (Joel 2:1-2, 12-16a)

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand.

"Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing—grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast.

CONFESSITIONAL PSALM with "Turn My Heart, O God" and "Create in Me"

Turn my heart, O God. Turn my heart, O God.
Take my pain and brokenness; shape my life for you.
Come and turn my heart, O God.

To verses | *To repeat refrain and last time*

ERIN & SONGLEADER

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; 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 offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.

*Turn my heart O God, Turn my heart O God
Take my pain and brokenness, shape my life for you
Come and turn my heart O God*

Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.

Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.

Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

*Turn my heart O God, Turn my heart O God
Take my pain and brokenness, shape my life for you
Come and turn my heart O God*

Let me hear joy and gladness; that the body you have broken may rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

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.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

*Turn my heart O God, Turn my heart O God
Take my pain and brokenness, shape my life for you
Come and turn my heart O God*

"Create in Me" - W&P 35

*Create in me, a clean heart O God,
that I might serve you;
Create in me, a clean heart O God,
that I might be renewed.
So fill me, and heal me,
and bring me back to you.
Create in me, a clean heart O God,
that I might serve you.*

*Take my pain and brokenness, shape my life for you,
Come and turn my heart O God*

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION "Return to God" NTF



Re - turn to God with all your heart, the source of grace and
mer - cy; come seek the ten - der faith-ful-ness of God.

GOSPEL Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Gospel according to Matthew the 6th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to his disciples] "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before others, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

The Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you O Christ

SERMON

CONFSSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most holy and merciful God,

we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our own fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

People: Have mercy on us, O God.

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbours, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

In times of great sorrow and heartache, God's people of old would wear their grief. With sackcloth and ashes, their outward form reflected the reality of their hearts. Today, we too wear ashes as a sign of our brokenness and the brokenness of our world. We acknowledge our need. We acknowledge our grief. We confess our sin. We come in our desire to be created anew, our longing to be made well.

“Remember That You are Dust” ACS 919

1* 2

Re - mem - ber that you are dust, and to

dust you shall re - turn.

Gracious God,
after the fire has raged and the flames have died away and grown cold, nothing remains but ashes.
We are dust and to dust we shall return.

After the hot passion of sin, after the cool calculation of evil, all that remains is brokenness and ashes.
We are dust and to dust we shall return.

After the zeal for living has ebbed away and life has run its course, there is nothing left but ashes.
We are dust, and to dust we shall return.

“Remember That You are Dust” ACS 919

1* 2

Re - mem - ber that you are dust, and to

dust you shall re - turn.

But the ashes are not the end. Smear'd in ashes we fall to our knees.
Washed in waters of grace we rise.

In the depths of sorrow we enter.
In Christ we rise with confidence and hope.

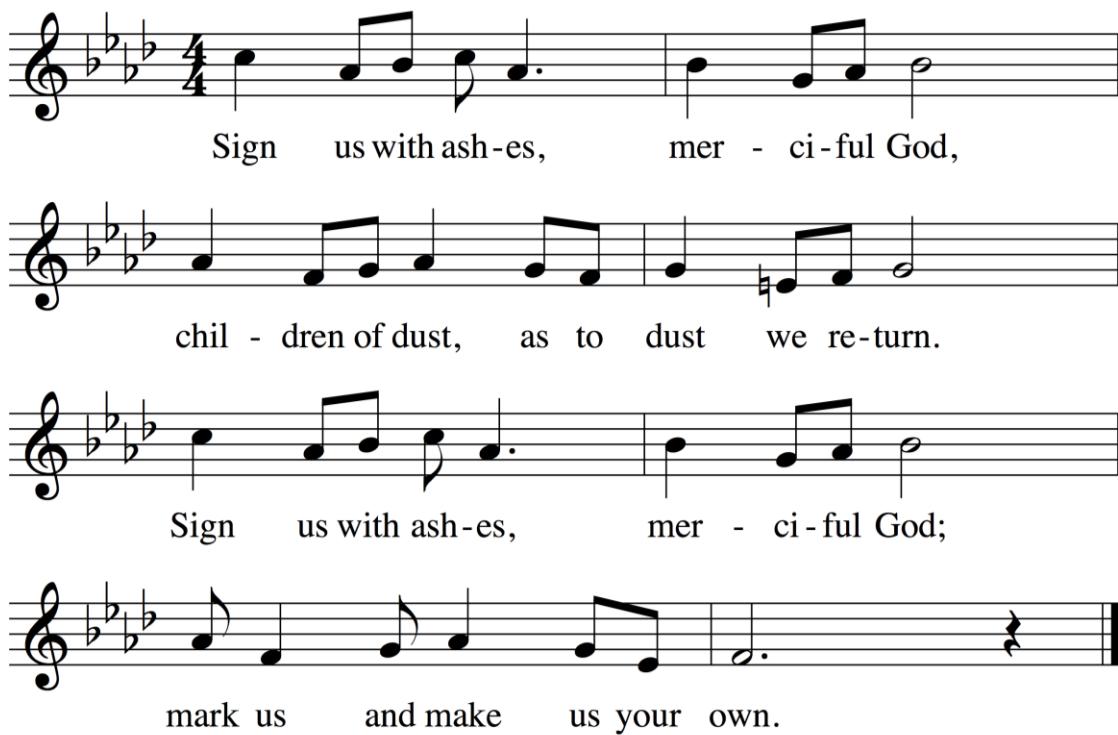
In the frailty of dust we begin.

Created anew, we rise to resurrection and life.

O Lord, we are but dust and ashes. But ashes are not the end. For out of the dust of the ground you form us anew. Over the ashes of our life you breathe your breath, and we rise to life in you.

O God, we give you our humble thanks and praise. Amen.

“Merciful God”

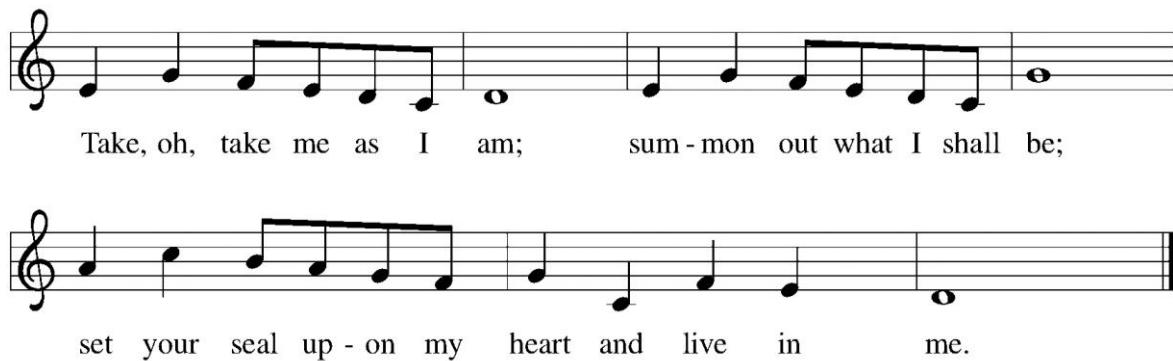


Sign us with ash-es, mer - ci - ful God,
chil - dren of dust, as to dust we re-turn.
Sign us with ash-es, mer - ci - ful God;
mark us and make us your own.

Traced in the sign of the cross, the ashes point not only to the reality of who we are, but call us to repent—to return to the cross of Christ—the place where our sin is forgiven, the place of our healing, the place where Jesus, arms open wide, pours out his life for us. This day, as you come to receive the ashes, the invitation of Christ for us: “Come, be made well.”

For all worshipping at home, please take a moment now *to mark the sign of the cross on your forehead and speak, “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*

“Take, O Take Me As I Am” – song video from St Mark’s Lutheran



Take, oh, take me as I am; sum - mon out what I shall be;
set your seal up - on my heart and live in me.

Let us pray. Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation
That we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Saviour,
Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our + Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. By your grace, create us anew, renew us in the gift of our baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our healing and life in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us;
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

"Healer of Our Every Ill" ELW 612



Refrain

Heal - er of our ev - 'ry ill, light of each to - mor - row,



give us peace be - yond our fear, and hope be - yond our sor - row.



1 You who know our fears and sad - ness, grace us with your
2 In the pain and joy be - hold - ing how your grace is
3 Give us strength to love each oth - er, ev - 'ry sis - ter,
4 You who know each thought and feel - ing, teach us all your



Refrain

peace and glad-ness; Spir-it of all com - fort, fill our hearts.
still un - fold - ing, give us all your vi - sion, God of love.
ev - 'ry broth - er; Spir-it of all kind-ness, be our guide.
way of heal - ing; Spir-it of com-pas - sion, fill each heart.

Serve God with gladness from wherever you are; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

You are welcome to remain in prayer or to depart in silence.

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