



# A LITURGY FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

The first day of Lent  
St Andrew's Church, Walkerville  
18<sup>th</sup> February, 2026

## GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

*The priest enters in silence. Please stand. Silence is kept.*

We gather in the presence of God,  
who knows us as we are and calls us toward life.

**We come, trusting in God's mercy and love.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Today, on Ash Wednesday,  
we enter the season of Lent,  
a season that invites us to pause,  
to notice, and to return to God.

The season of Lent is a time of repentance,  
reflection, hope, and renewal.

Repentance in Lent is about turning our attention  
back to God, creating space to notice  
what has been shaping us,  
and allowing God to meet us with mercy and grace.

Reflection invites us to pay attention:  
to where God is present in our lives,  
and to where we may have become distracted,  
weary, or disconnected.

Hope reminds us that God continues to meet us  
where we are, that even in our human frailty,  
God is at work, drawing us toward healing and new life.

Renewal speaks of God's desire to restore, reshape,  
and bring transformation in us  
through love, grace, and faithfulness.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of this sacred journey, inviting us to walk with honesty and humility, mindful of our desire for God's forgiveness and love.

Through prayer, fasting, and acts of compassion, we make space for transformation, seeking to grow in faith, to draw closer to God, and to live as people shaped by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Let us pray together.

**God of love and hope and life,  
at the beginning of Lent we come to you.**

**You know who we are.  
You know what shapes our lives.  
You know what matters to us.  
You know where we carry pain  
and where we need healing.  
We come to you seeking forgiveness.  
We come to you seeking strength for the journey ahead.  
We come to you trusting in your love.  
God who invites us to repent, to reflect,  
and open ourselves to your hope and renewal,  
meet us here and shape us for the journey ahead.**

*Sentence of the Day (please sit)*

Return to the Lord, your God,  
for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,  
and relents from punishing.

*Joel 2: 13b*

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

*Psalm 51: 1-17*

<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, in your enduring goodness :  
according to the fulness of your compassion  
blot out my offences.

**<sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness :  
and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup> For I acknowledge my rebellion :  
and my sin is ever before me.

**<sup>4</sup> Against you only have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your eyes :  
so you will be just in your sentence  
and blameless in your judging.**

<sup>6</sup> You that desire truth in the inward parts :  
O teach me wisdom in the secret places of the heart.

**<sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean :  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

<sup>8</sup> Make me hear of joy and gladness :  
let the bones which you have broken rejoice.

**<sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins :  
and blot out all my iniquities.**

<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God :  
and renew a right spirit within me.

**<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me out from your presence :  
do not take your holy spirit from me.**

<sup>12</sup> O give me the gladness of your help again :  
and support me with a willing spirit.

**<sup>13</sup> Then will I teach transgressors your ways :  
and sinners shall turn to you again.**

<sup>14</sup> O Lord God of my salvation, deliver me from bloodshed :  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.

**<sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips :  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

<sup>16</sup> You take no pleasure in sacrifice, or I would give it :  
burnt-offerings you do not want.

**<sup>17</sup> The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit :  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

NT Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10

5 <sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ,  
since God is making his appeal through us;  
we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.  
21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin,  
so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 1 As we work together with him,  
we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

2 For he says,  
'At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.'

See, now is the acceptable time;  
see, now is the day of salvation!

3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way,  
so that no fault may be found with our ministry,

4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in  
every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships,  
calamities,

5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours,  
sleepless nights, hunger;

6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness,  
holiness of spirit, genuine love,

7 truthful speech, and the power of God;  
with the weapons of righteousness  
for the right hand and for the left;

8 in honour and dishonour,  
in ill repute and good repute.

We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;

9 as unknown, and yet are well known;

as dying, and see – we are alive;  
as punished, and yet not killed;

10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;  
as poor, yet making many rich;  
as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Hear the word of the Lord,  
**thanks be to God.**

*Hymn (please stand)*

- 1. From the deep places, hear my cry,  
those hidden depths of guilt within:  
O God of mercy, God Most High,  
keep no account of all my sin.**
- 2. Before your glory none can stand,  
no mortal eye behold your face:  
extend to me your kingly hand,  
the sovereign touch of saving grace.**
- 3. O Lord, in whom all needs are met,  
draw near in love to me, I pray,  
for on your word my hopes are set,  
as watchmen wait for coming day.**
- 4. As watchmen wait till dawn appears,  
so God's redeeming love is shown;  
to shed, unfailing through the years,  
the dew of blessing on his own.**

*Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)*

*Gospel Reading: Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18*

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew,  
chapter six beginning at the first verse.

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

<sup>1</sup> 'Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup> 'So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

<sup>3</sup> But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup> 'And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

<sup>6</sup> But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>16</sup> 'And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting.

Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

<sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,<sup>18</sup> so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

For the gospel of the Lord,  
**praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*The Sermon (please sit)*

*After the sermon, silence is kept.*

## A LITANY OF PENITENCE

God the Father, maker of heaven and earth,  
**have mercy on us.**

God the Son, redeemer of the world,  
**have mercy on us.**

God the Holy Spirit, giver of light and life,  
**have mercy on us.**

God the Trinity of love,  
**have mercy on us.**

For accepting life yet living it without you  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For living without concern for others,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For tolerating oppression, injustice and wrong,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For disobeying your will and commandments,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For refusing to love and forgive others,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For turning the world to our own purposes and desires,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

That in all things we may hold to your will and purpose,  
**Lord hear us. Amen.**

Most merciful God,

**we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,  
and in what we have failed to do:**

**we have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;  
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.**

**Father, forgive us.**

**Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## THE RECEIVING OF ASHES

The time for ashing has come.

**The time to remember that we are dust  
and to dust we shall return –  
dust formed by God.**

**The time to sit with the truth  
that we are created by God, in love, from the dust.**

The time for ashing has come.

**The time to fast and to give,  
the time for stillness and quiet thought,  
the time for repentance and for gratitude.**

*The ashes are placed on the Altar and the priest says*

God our Creator,  
you create us from the dust of the earth:  
grant that these ashes may be for us  
a sign of our penitence  
and a reminder of your enduring love.

**Amen.**

Friends in Christ,  
I invite you to receive these ashes  
as a sign of our humanity  
and of the spirit of repentance  
with which we turn again toward God.

*The ashes are placed on each person's forehead with the words*

Remember that you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return -  
but love changes everything.

*The Absolution. Standing, the priest says*

With our hearts turned toward God,  
and our lives marked by ash,  
we place ourselves again in God's care.

God meets us with mercy and compassion,  
releasing us from what weighs us down  
and inviting us into new life.

Know that you are forgiven.  
Receive God's grace.

And, guided by the Holy Spirit,  
walk in the way of Christ.

**Amen.**

### THE GREETING OF PEACE

*Please stand.*

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.  
**We meet in his name and share his peace.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

*Hymn*

- 1. Forgive us when our deeds ignore  
your righteous rule of all the earth,  
when our decisions harm the poor,  
denying their eternal worth.**
- 2. Forgive us when we turn aside  
from what is honest, true and fair,  
when dreams of pleasure, wealth and pride  
supplant your clear commands to care.**
- 3. Forgive us, Lord, our endless greed  
for what was never truly ours,  
when, driven more by want than need,  
we harness this world's brutal powers.**
- 4. Forgive us that we change the rules  
by which the game of life is played,  
and never learn to wield the tools  
which could see joy and hope remade.**
- 5. Forgive us, God! Our lives betray  
our shallow, vague response to grace;  
so help us walk your holy way,  
to make your world a better place.**

*Martin Leckebusch (b. 1962)*

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.  
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.  
Accept and use our offerings for your glory  
and for the service of your kingdom.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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 indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,  
almighty God and everlasting Father,  
through Jesus Christ your Son.

For in these forty days you lead us into the desert of repentance  
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline  
we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.

Through fasting, prayer and acts of service  
you bring us back to your generous heart.  
Through study of your holy word  
you open our eyes to your presence in the world  
and free our hands to welcome others  
into the radiant splendour of your love.

And so with everyone who believes in you, with all the Saints  
and angels we rejoice and praise you, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

And now we thank you for these gifts of your creation,  
this bread and wine; may we who receive them,  
as Jesus said, share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread;  
and when he had given you thanks  
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,  
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup,  
and again giving thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying,  
'Drink from this, all of you.  
This is my blood of the new covenant  
shed for you and for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ  
and to remember all he has done for us:  
Fill us with your spirit that we may follow Jesus  
in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your  
peace to this world that you have made.  
Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
are yours for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

*Please sit or kneel*

As our Saviour Christ has taught us,  
we are confident to pray,

**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 for ever.  
Amen.**

## THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND COMMUNION

We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.

We who are many are one body:  
**for we all share in the one bread.**

**Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.  
Come let us take this holy sacrament  
of the body and blood of Christ  
in remembrance that he died for us,  
and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

*Communion is administered*

*After Communion*

**Compassionate and loving God,  
through your son Jesus Christ you have fed us  
and have reconciled your people to yourself.  
Following his example of fasting and prayer,  
may we obey you with willing hearts  
and serve one another in holy love.**

*Blessing*

Christ our Saviour draw you to himself,  
that you may find in him crucified,  
a sure ground for faith,  
a firm support for hope,  
and the assurance of forgiveness  
and the blessing of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be upon you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

*Hymn*

- 1. Take up thy cross, the Saviour said,  
if thou wouldest my disciple be;  
deny thyself, the world forsake,  
and humbly follow after me.**
- 2. Take up thy cross: let not its weight  
fill thy weak spirit with alarm;  
his strength shall bear thy spirit up,  
and brace thy heart, and nerve thine arm.**
- 3. Take up thy cross, nor heed the shame,  
nor let thy foolish pride rebel:  
thy Lord for thee the cross endured,  
to save thy soul from death and hell.**

4. Take up thy cross then in his strength,  
and calmly every danger brave;  
'twill guide thee to a better home,  
and lead to victory o'er the grave.
5. Take up thy cross, and follow Christ,  
nor think till death to lay it down;  
for only they who bear the cross  
may hope to wear the glorious crown.
6. To thee, great Lord, the One in Three,  
all praise for evermore ascend:  
O grant us in our home to see  
the heavenly life that knows no end.

*Charles Everest (1814-77)*

*The priest says*

May your Lenten journey draw you closer to God.  
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ, Amen.**



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