

A SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

GREETING

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also, with you.

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

God's mercy endures forever.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray that God will renew us in the image of Christ.

(Silent prayer)

Dear Jesus, teach us to welcome the discipline of the gospel, and conform us to the image of your Son, so that we may be kind in thought, gentle in speech and generous in action. We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Christ, to observe 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 of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now bow before our Creator and Redeemer.

A brief silence is kept

CONFESSION AND PARDON

Psalm 51:1-17

May the almighty and merciful God, who desires not the death of a sinner but that we turn from wickedness and live, accept your repentance, forgive your sins, and restore you by the Holy Spirit to newness of life. **Amen.**

HYMN

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Isaiah 58:1-12.

SERMON

THE PEACE

Let us offer one another signs of reconciliation and love.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. For your long-suffering with the sins of humankind,

we thank you, Lord.

For the suffering of Christ on earth and for his intercession for human beings in glory,

we thank you, Lord.

For the redemption of the world through the shame of the cross and the pain of death,

we thank you, Lord.

From all misunderstanding of your purpose in pain; and from complaining that you do not care about our suffering;

good Lord, deliver us.

From refusing to share the sufferings of the world; and from forgetting the pain and sorrow of others;

good Lord, deliver us.

For all who are handicapped in the race of life through no fault of their own, for all who suffer permanent disability from injury or illness, and for all are suffering a terminal disease,

hear us, good Lord.

For those whose livelihood is insecure: the unemployed, the overworked, the hungry, and the destitute, and for those who have been oppressed, ruined, or driven to despair,

hear us, good Lord.

For children whose surroundings hide from them your love and beauty, and for all those who have no parents to care for them,

hear us, good Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. (Personal prayers and petitions)

Pastoral Closing Prayer Our Father, who art in heaven...

HYMN

BLESSING

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Amen.