



# Ash Wednesday

Feb 18, 2026



LOVE GOD   GROW TOGETHER   SERVE OUR WORLD



Ash Wednesday | Feb 18, 2026

7:30pm - Worship & Communion Service



## What is Ash Wednesday?

In the earliest centuries of the Church, newcomers to the Christian community were baptised at Easter. It seemed to be the obvious time to do it – Easter, the conquest of death, the beginning of new life – and so it was that it came to be the common practice for bishops, particularly, to baptise and anoint new believers at that great feast. But of course, believers had to be prepared for this event, prepared by instruction, and prayer, and self-denial. It was believed that self-denial; fasting and extra prayer was something that, as it were, limbered you up, rather like doing exercises for some great race. It made you more spiritually mobile and agile. And so that period of preparation for baptism came to be associated with fasting, with prayer and with self-denial.

That's how Lent began. A period where people were thinking about baptism, about the beginning of new life, whether literally as new converts to Christianity or – for the rest of the church – people wanting to renew that sense of commitment.

... But that also became associated very early on with the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, fasting and praying and discovering what God was asking of him. In the Gospels we're told that Jesus goes straight from his own baptism into the desert to confront the Devil and to overcome temptation. And that forty days in the desert became a great image that controlled the sense of the pre-Easter fast, that pre-Easter preparation.

... In the Middle Ages, in many English churches, the hangings and the decorations in church were replaced with hangings of very coarse cloth – sack cloth. People would sometimes wear sack cloth and the beginning of Lent was marked by a ceremony where ash was placed on people's heads in memory of their mortality – Ash Wednesday.

... But it's important to remember that the word 'Lent' itself comes from the old English word for 'spring'. It's not about feeling gloomy for forty days; it's not about making yourself miserable for forty days; it's not even about giving things up for forty days. Lent is springtime. It's preparing for that great climax of springtime which is Easter – new life bursting through death. And as we prepare ourselves for Easter during these days, by prayer and by self-denial, what motivates us and what fills the horizon is not self-denial as an end in itself but trying to sweep and clean the room of our own minds and hearts so that the new life really may have room to come in and take over and transform us at Easter.

-- Dr. Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury

## WELCOME

**HYMN**

**STAND**

## OPENING PRAYERS

**SIT/KNEEL**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

We come from scattered lives to meet with God.

Let us recognize his presence with us.

*Silence is kept.*

As God's people we have gathered:

**in Christ we are one.**

Let us pray.

**Almighty and everlasting God, you despise nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our brokenness, may obtain from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

**LESSON**

**Hebrews 10:1-10**

**SIT**

<sup>1</sup> For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

<sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? <sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,

but a body have you prepared for me;

<sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings

you have taken no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,

as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

<sup>8</sup> When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second.

<sup>10</sup> And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL**

**Matthew 6:1-6; 16-21**

**STAND**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

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

<sup>1</sup> [Jesus said:] “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup> Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>5</sup> And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But when 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 when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,<sup>18</sup> that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup> “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,<sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel of Christ.

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

## **SERMON**

Karen Koiter

Associate Pastor (Justice Animator)

**STAND** for prayer, then **SIT**

## **REFLECTION**

Dear friends in Christ,

Every year at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our redemption through the 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 remembering our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes,  
an ancient sign,  
speaking of the frailty and uncertainty of human life,  
and marking the penitence of the community as a whole.

I invite you therefore, in the name of the Lord,  
to observe a holy Lent  
by self-examination, penitence, prayer,  
fasting, and almsgiving,  
and by reading and meditating on the word of God.  
Let us sit or kneel before our Creator and Redeemer.

*Silence is kept.*

#### **THE LITANY OF PENITENCE**

**SIT/KNEEL**

**Most holy and merciful Father,  
we confess to you, to one another,  
and to the whole communion of saints  
in heaven and on earth,  
that we have sinned by our own 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, Lord.**

We have been deaf 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, Lord.**

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness;  
the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives.

**We confess to you, Lord.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways,  
and our exploitation of other people,

**We confess to you, Lord.**

Our anger at our own frustration,  
and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

**We confess to you, Lord.**

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts,  
and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

**We confess to you, Lord.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship,  
and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

**We confess to you, Lord.**

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done:  
for our blindness to human need and suffering,  
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty.

**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

For all false judgements,  
for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbours and  
for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

For our waste and pollution of your creation,  
and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;

**Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great.**

## THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

### PRAYER OVER THE ASHES

**SIT/KNEEL**

Almighty God,  
from the dust of the earth you have created us.  
May these ashes be for us a sign  
of our mortality and penitence,  
and a reminder that only by your gracious gift  
are we given eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**Amen.**

*Those who desire to receive ashes come forward, and the ashes are applied to the forehead of each person with the following words:*

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

*After all who desire ashes have received them, the celebrant leads the congregation in the conclusion of the confession, all kneeling.*

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 Lord,  
**bring us with all your saints  
to the joy of his resurrection.**

*The priest stands and, facing the people, says:*

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

**Amen.**

## **THE PEACE**

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

## **OFFERTORY WORSHIP**

**STAND**

## **THE PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS**

Merciful God,  
turn us from sin to faithfulness.  
Accept our offering, and prepare us to celebrate  
the death and resurrection of Christ our Saviour,  
who is alive and reigns with you now and for ever.

**Amen.**

## COMMUNION

### EUCARISTIC PRAYER

### SIT/KNEEL

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.**

Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth;  
we give you thanks and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who was tempted in every way, yet did not sin.

By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil,  
and to live no longer for ourselves alone,  
but for him who died for us and rose again.

Therefore with angels and archangels,  
and all who have served you in every age,  
we raise our voices to proclaim the glory of your name.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth of your glory are full.  
Hosanna hosanna hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. (repeat)**

We praise you, merciful Father,  
not as we ought, but as we are able,  
because in your tender love  
you gave the world your only Son,  
in order that the world might be saved through him.  
He made you known by taking the form of a servant,  
healing the sick, liberating the oppressed,  
reaching out to the lost.

Betrayed, reviled, and nailed to the cross,  
he confronted the power of sin  
and disarmed it for ever.

In his offering of himself,  
he became the perfect and sufficient sacrifice  
for the sins of the whole world.

Redeemed by Christ,  
we have been adopted as your children;  
by your pardon  
you have made us worthy to praise you.

On the night he was betrayed,  
Jesus, at supper with his friends,  
took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread,  
gave it to them, and said, "Take and eat:  
this is my body which is given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine,  
and when he had given thanks,  
he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this all of you:  
this is my blood of the new covenant  
which is shed for you and for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it,  
do this for the remembrance of me."

In obedience to him and with grateful hearts  
we approach your holy table,  
remembering our Saviour's sacrifice,  
and rejoicing in his victory.  
Confident in his sovereign purpose, we declare our faith.

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

Send your Holy Spirit on us  
that as we receive this bread and this cup  
we may partake of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

May we be renewed in his risen life, filled with love,  
and strengthened in our will to serve others;  
and make of our lives, we pray,  
a pure and holy sacrifice, acceptable to you,  
knitting us together as one in your Son Jesus Christ,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honour and glory, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray,

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

## THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread,

**Communion in Christ's body once broken.**

Let your Church be the wheat  
which bears its fruit in dying.

**If we have died with him, we shall live with him;  
if we hold firm, we shall reign with him.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

### COMMUNION

*All those who have placed their trust in Jesus as Saviour and Lord,  
are welcome to the Lord's table. Gluten-free wafers are available upon  
request from the communion administrant.*

## WORSHIP DURING COMMUNION

### PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

**STAND**

God of compassion, through your Son Jesus Christ you reconciled your people to yourself. Following his example of prayer and fasting, may we obey you with willing hearts and serve one another in holy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Glory to God,  
**whose power, working in us,**  
**can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.**  
**Glory to God from generation to generation,**  
**in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever.**  
**Amen.**

### **THE BLESSING**

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

### **CLOSING HYMN**

**STAND**

### **THE DISMISSAL**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**



## SERMON NOTES



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**GET IN TOUCH**

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