

“In many cultures there is an ancient custom of giving a tenth of each year’s income to some holy use. For Christians, to observe the forty days of Lent is to do the same thing with roughly a tenth of each year’s days. After being baptized by John in the River Jordan, Jesus went off alone into the wilderness where he spent forty days asking himself the question of what it meant to be Jesus. During Lent, Christians are supposed to ask one way or another what it means to be themselves... to answer questions like this is to begin to hear something not only of who you are but of both what you are becoming and what you are failing to become. It can be pretty depressing business all in all, but if sackcloth and ashes are at the start of it, something like Easter may be at the end.”

— Frederick Buechner

## **Come, Ye Sinner**

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore  
Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, love and power.

I will arise and go to Jesus; He will embrace me in His arms  
In the arms of my dear Savior, O there are ten thousand charms.

Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome, God's free bounty glorify;  
True belief and true repentance, every grace that brings you nigh.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden, bruised and broken by the fall  
If you tarry till you're better, you will never come at all.

I will arise and go to Jesus; He will embrace me in His arms  
In the arms of my dear Savior, O there are ten thousand charms.

Let not conscience make you linger; not of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness He requireth is to feel your need of Him.

I will arise and go to Jesus; He will embrace me in His arms  
In the arms of my dear Savior, O there are ten thousand charms.

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and all that is within me, bless his holy name!  
Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits,  
who forgives all your iniquity,  
who heals all your diseases,  
who redeems your life from the pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,  
who satisfies you with good  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.  
The LORD works righteousness  
and justice for all who are oppressed.  
He made known his ways to Moses,  
his acts to the people of Israel.  
The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
He will not always chide,  
nor will he keep his anger forever.  
He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.  
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;  
as far as the east is from the west,  
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.  
As a father shows compassion to his children,  
so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.  
For he knows our frame;  
he remembers that we are dust. —Psalm 103:1-14

# Welcome

## INTRODUCTION

This service marks the beginning of Lent. Why Lent? Lent is a time of spiritual spring cleaning. It is a time where we take stock of our lives and identify the things that need to go—like unbelief or identifying things that need to grow, like belief, prayer, or worship. It is a time of the church year most associated with “disciplines”. This is a time where we take on various disciplines in an effort to grow as disciples. It is important to remember that the point of Lent is not to give up chocolate or coffee, but to give up sin! And become more like Jesus. If Lent is to be a time of repentance discipline and renewal then in an Ash Wednesday service we are to be reminded of our sin and mortality, make confession, and experience forgiveness through Christ’s death and resurrection. At the end of the service, people come forward to have ashes smudged on their foreheads in the shape of the cross. It is a very appropriate symbol for the season of Lent. The ashes signify the reality of sin and death. “Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return” (Gen. 3:19) is what God said to Adam when he announced the curse on all humankind. This gives us freedom to name our sin and talk about our unbelief.

Keep in mind the ashes are imposed in the sign of the cross—which is a sign of how God has triumphed over sin and death through the work of Christ. This gives us the freedom to ask God to “help our unbelief.”

### **Lead Me To The Cross**

Savior, I come, quiet my soul, remember  
Redemption’s hill  
Where Your blood was spilled for my ransom

Everything I once held dear  
I count it all as loss

Lead me to the cross  
Where Your love poured out  
Bring me to my knees  
Lord, I lay me down  
Rid me of myself, I belong to You  
Oh, lead me,  
Lead me to the cross

You were as I, tempted and tried, human  
The Word became flesh, bore my sin and death  
Now You’re risen

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION

O Lord, open my lips,

**And my lips will declare your praise.**

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;

**You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.**

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

**A broken and contrite heart, O God,**

You will not despise.

— from Psalm 51:15-17

Lord you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Teach us, Lord, to count our days that we may gain a wise heart. Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen

— based on Psalm 90

O Lord our God, long-suffering and full of compassion; Be present with us as we enter this season in which we recall our Savior's suffering and celebrate his triumph. Give us your Holy Spirit, so that as we acknowledge our sins and implore your pardon, we may also have the strength to deny ourselves and be upheld in times of temptation through Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **Create In Me a Clean Heart**

Create in me a clean heart, O God

And renew a right spirit within me

Create in me a clean heart, O God

And renew a right spirit within me

Cast me not away from Thy presence, O Lord

And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation

And renew a right spirit within me

Lent is time to examine our heart and ask questions about our spiritual health:

- What are my characteristic sins, and how can I work and pray for change?
- What idols have captured my imagination so that my love for the living God has grown cold?
- In what ways is my devotion to Christ and His church less than wholehearted?

— from Craig Higgins

## SILENT REFLECTION

## IMPOSITION OF ASHES

### **No One Like Our God**

Hallelujah, chains are broken  
Your death has spoken life to us  
And every accusation, all our condemnation  
Silenced at the cross

Hallelujah, free salvation  
The burden of a world so lost  
Lifted from our shoulders  
Carried by the Savior's passion at the cross

Chorus:

There is no one like our God  
There is no one like our Savior  
How great is Your blessing How great is Your love  
There is no one like our God

Repeat Verse 2 and Chorus

Never has there been  
Never will there be  
A God like You who came down in mercy  
Never will there be  
A greater hope than this  
There is no one like our God

## CONFESSION

Almighty and Ever-Faithful Father, in this time of remembrance, we come confessing our amnesia. We have been quick to forget your blessings, kindness and care.

**We have forgotten the lessons you have taught us, the paths you have smoothed for us, the rescues you have made of us. We have forgotten even the monumental things in our lives—the Passovers, the manna, the Jerichos. We have forgotten your greatness in the lives of others. We have forgotten the things of the world are often bitter and unfulfilling; And time and again chase after them like unschooled children. We have forgotten our prodigal returns and your Fatherly embraces. We have been like grumbling Israelites, forgetting the Red Sea, like David gazing and exploiting Bathsheeba, forgetting Goliath, like fearful Peter, forgetting you commanded and calmed the sea.**

We ask you to remind us:

**Remind us of your faithfulness, love, adoption, care, goodness, and peace. Carve deep grooves of memory upon our hearts. Lift our eyes off the ground and raise them to the horizon. Help us to know your faithfulness endures to all generations. Help us to believe you are good – always. Help us to become students and historians of your daily graces. Help us to help each other in our remembrances.**

Genuine repentance involves two things: the dying-away of the old self and the coming-to-life of the new. The dying-away of the old self is to be genuinely sorry for sin, to hate it more and more, to run away from it. The coming-to-life of the new self is whole-hearted delight in God through Christ and desire to do every kind of good as God wants us to. Together, as Christ's body, we now confess our sin and express our longing to live in joyful obedience to God. — based on Heidelberg Catechism

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 comfort, and 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 judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbor, 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;  
**Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.**

Accomplish in us 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 yours saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

#### ASSURANCE

I can assure you that on the basis of God's promises and in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.  
**In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!**

### **What Wondrous Love Is This?**

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss  
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,  
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,  
When I was sinking down, sinking down,  
When I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown,  
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul, for my soul,  
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing;  
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing.  
To God and to the Lamb Who is the great "I Am";  
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;  
While millions join the theme, I will sing.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;  
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.  
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be;  
And through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;  
And through eternity, I'll sing on.

### BENEDICTION

### **How Deep The Father's Love For Us**

How deep the Father's love for us  
How vast beyond all measure  
That He would give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss  
The Father turns His face away  
As wounds which mar the chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross  
My sin upon His shoulders  
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice  
Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there  
Until it was accomplished  
His dying breath has brought me life  
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything  
No gifts, no powers, no wisdom  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ  
His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?  
I cannot give an answer  
But this I know with all my heart  
His wounds have paid my ransom

