



ASH WEDNESDAY 2021

ALDERSGATE CHURCH

FEBRUARY 17, 7:00PM

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Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

This year our Ash Wednesday service at Aldersgate Church will be online only, but we hope to maintain an interactive experience like we've had the last few years. This booklet will serve as a bulletin and an explanation of the various "stations" in which we will engage. Our hope is for you to create space in your home to reflect on the deep and unending love of God in Jesus Christ.

Ash Wednesday kicks off the season of Lent, which in the early church was designed as a 40 day period of preparation for Baptism. Candidates would enter an intentional and intensive time of prayer, fasting (this where the concept of "giving something up for Lent" comes from), and learning, and would then be baptized at an Easter vigil service on the Saturday before Easter Sunday. We encourage you take up some practices this Lenten season. Maybe commit to reading scripture every day (See our Luke reading schedule on our website, join one of our Lenten Study Groups (not too late!), or even just read the book from our study (Love is the Way). Regardless, get intentional with this beautiful season!

A Word about the Service

Over the last few years our Ash Wednesday Worship experience has been a free and open time of moving through interactive stations at your own pace. We've found this service to be a nice change of pace, and a good, reflective way to kick off the Lenten season. Creating this kind of open space doesn't really work online, so this year we're going to lead you through each station. We have sent some of the supplies you will need, but there are others that are both difficult to mail and also items you may have around the house. We hope you will join us on February 17 at 7:00pm!

What You Will Need for this Service

- First, consider setting up a table of some kind in a way that is worshipful to you.
- This Booklet! (Includes station instructions, responsive readings, song lyrics, and writing/doodle space)
- Call to Worship Candle to light and matches or lighter
- Station I: Writing utensil & Prayer Sheet (in bulletin)
- Station II: Shallow bowl or saucer, milk, food coloring, cotton ball dipped in dish soap
- Station III: Candle for Remembrance
- Station IV: sandpaper (included with this booklet) and a Small block/scrap piece of wood (about a size that fits in your hand)
- Station V: Charcoal (included with booklet), a bowl of warm soapy water and a drying towel
- Station VI: Communion elements (Bread and Juice)

Order of Worship



Gather

Welcome

Call to Worship

ONE: Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near. A day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; Rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God,

ALL: ...for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

ONE: Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly;

ALL: ...gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast.

ONE: We light a candle tonight to usher in the presence of the Holy Spirit, that she may abide with us and connect us. [light candle]

ALL: All are welcome, all are invited, all are called.

ONE: Beloved, let us sing together.

Opening Song: What Wondrous Love is This (UMH #292, verses 1 & 2)

A Word: Luke 9:51-62

Stations for prayer, reflection, singing, communion & repentance

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Song: What Wondrous Love is This (UMH #292, verses 3 & 4)

Blessing

Tonight's Song Lyrics

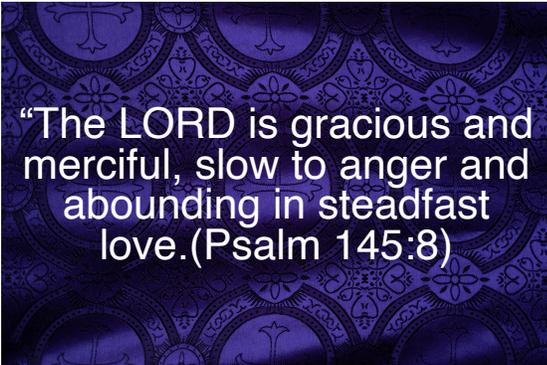
What Wondrous Love is This (verses 1 & 2 opening song, verses 3 & 4 closing song):

1. 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.

2. 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 life
to lay aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
to lay aside his crown for my soul.

3. 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.

3. 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.



“The LORD is gracious and
merciful, slow to anger and
abounding in steadfast
love. (Psalm 145:8)

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

Lord, listen to your children praying
Lord, send your spirit in this place
Lord, listen to your children praying
Send love, send us power, send us grace

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 your presence, O Lord
And cast not thy Holy Spirit from me
Restore unto me
The joy of thy salvation
And renew a right spirit within me

Once Again

Verse 1

Jesus Christ, I think upon Your sacrifice
You became nothing, poured out to death
Many times I've wondered at Your gift of life
I'm in that place once again, I'm in that place once again

Chorus

Once again I look upon the cross Where You died
I'm humbled by Your mercy and I'm broken inside
Once again I thank You, once again I pour out my life

Verse 2

Now You are Exalted to the highest place
King of the heavens where one day I'll bow
But for now I marvel at this saving grace
I'm full of praise once again, I'm full of praise once again

Bridge: Thank you for the cross, thank your for the cross,
Thank you for the cross, my friend (repeat)

For All the Saints

For all the saints
Who've shown your love
In how they live
And where they move
For mindful women
Caring men
Accept our gratitude again

Bless all whose will
Or name or love
Reflects the grace
Of heaven above
Though unclaimed
By earthly powers
Your life through theirs
Has hallowed ours

Station I
Prayers Near & Far:
“Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.”
Jeremiah 29:12

Our first station calls us to pray for our world, near and far. Below are some topics to spend a few minutes in prayer about. You can pray in your heart, out loud, or even write some prayers pertinent to each topic. Pray as the Spirit leads you. Whatever comes to mind, take it as a cue to guide your prayer.



Home _____



Community/City/State _____



Church _____



Nation _____



World & Climate _____



Station II Create in Me...

“Create in me a clean heart,
O God, and renew a right
spirit within me.”

Psalm 51:10

A huge part of Ash Wednesday and Lent is taking inventory of our lives, and inviting the Spirit of God to come and transform our hearts. For this station we're going to do a little science experiment and reflect on the ways in which it can be a metaphor for the Spirit's transformative work in our lives. Transformation is about giving the Spirit

access to us, and like this experiment, we don't get to control the results. We put the ingredients together (spiritual practices) and then watch as God's Spirit does amazing and beautiful things in and with us. How will you open yourself to the Work of the Spirit Lent?



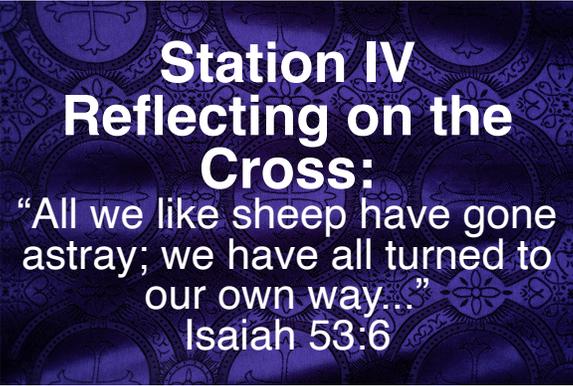
Station III Remembering:

“...Blessed are you who
weep now, for you will
laugh.”

Luke 6:21

As we enter into this evening and season of reflection, it's hard not to be aware of what a year it has been. Just three Sundays after last year's Ash Wednesday service, we went to on-line only worship. Nearly a year later, here we are. So much has been lost. In this station we will take a moment to name our losses. What is something or someone you

are grieving these days? It doesn't have to be someone or something you've lost in the last year, specifically, but maybe it is. Take a moment, reflect on your own grief and loss, name it, and light a candle in gratitude for that person, event, or job, or whatever it is you grieve. As you do, also ask God's Spirit to come into your grief, and to bring you comfort and lead you to seasons of hope, joy, and laughter.

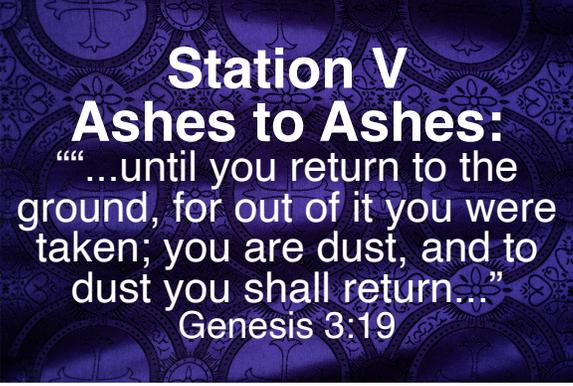


Station IV Reflecting on the Cross:

“All we like sheep have gone
astray; we have all turned to
our own way...”
Isaiah 53:6

We all at times have not loved God, self, and neighbor as we should. And when we don't, we hurt God's world. But Jesus takes the weight of our sins on the cross. There is a way in which we all collectively construct the cross on which Christ was crucified, in which his saving work is finished. Take your block of wood and sandpaper, and

meditatively sand it as a way of connecting to your own contributions to creating Christ's cross. Let the sound of it remind you of the work God does to refine us. Let the feel of the rough paper remind you of the fractured world we create. Let the cross remind you that we are yet forgiven, freed, and eternally loved.

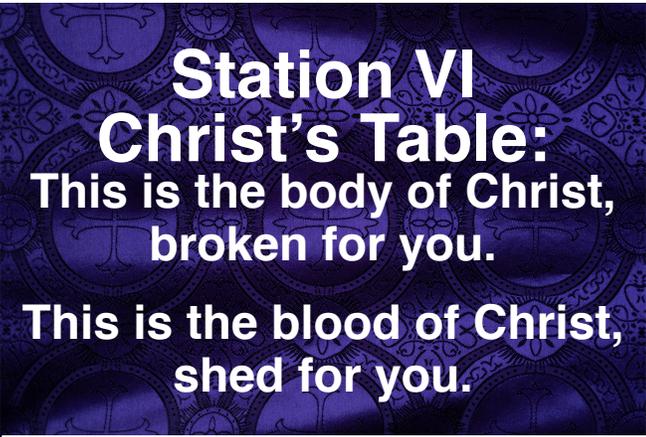


Station V Ashes to Ashes:

“...until you return to the
ground, for out of it you were
taken; you are dust, and to
dust you shall return...”
Genesis 3:19

We are all going to die. But **yet we are all going to live**. As God made life out of the dust of the ground, so too will we return to the dust and ash of the earth- God's playground. And in becoming one with the soil again, out of the soil life will continue to spring forth. The ashes are the core symbol of the Ash Wednesday Service. They remind

us of our own mortality, they remind us that we are dirtied by our own sin, and, yet, they also remind us, death does not have the final word. Take your charcoal and rub it with your fingers. Notice that ash on your fingers, and let it remind you that you have sinned and will continue to do so. If you are comfortable and have others worshiping in your household with you, take the ash from your finger and smudge a little on the forehead of those you are with, saying, “repent and believe the Good News: Though you have fallen, you have life as God's beloved.” Then wash your hands in the soapy water, watch the ash disappear, and know that no matter what, you are forgiven, Beloved, and beautiful.



Station VI
Christ's Table:
This is the body of Christ,
broken for you.
This is the blood of Christ,
shed for you.

Jesus' table is open to all, no matter your age, faith background, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, socio-economic status... All are invited.

In closing, and as you are comfortable, follow along with the liturgy here as we commune together in our scattered space, knowing full well, that no matter

our distance, the Spirit of Christ connects us...

Pastor. The Lord be with you.

ALL: AND ALSO WITH YOU

Pastor: Lift up your hearts

ALL: WE LIFT THEM UP TO THE LORD

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

ALL: IT IS RIGHT TO GIVE OUR THANKS AND PRAISE

[Pastor speaks and prays the words of institution, concluding with the kid-friendly Lord's Prayer below]

Dear God- our Mommy, Daddy, and Parent- up in heaven
You are good. Come here with us
And do what you want to do, just like you do in heaven
Thank you for giving me food to eat, clothes to wear
And a warm blanket at night
Thank you for loving me always, even when I make bad choices
I am sorry
Help me to love my friends and family
Even when they make bad choices
Keep me safe
You are good. So very good
Amen.

Pastor: This is the Body of Christ broken for you. This is the blood of Christ poured out for you.

Doodle Space

"Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near- a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come... Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing... Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast.

(Joel 2:1-2, 12-16 NRSV)