

Joint Ash Wednesday Service: Dust and Ashes
Christ First, Erindale, Munns, St. Stephen's-on-the-Hill,
Streetsville, and Westminster United Churches
7 p.m. Wed. February 17, 2021

Preparation:

- piece of paper with a tear shape on it and a pen or marker
- something to mark a cross on your forehead: ashes, eyeshadow, graphite pencil, olive oil, etc.
- copy of bulletin (optional).

God Gathers Us

Service was written by Gord Dunbar, Lent-Easter 2021 Gathering, page. 67.

Gathering Music

Welcome

Acknowledgement of the Land

Lighting the Christ Candle

Call to Worship and Prayer of Approach *(based on Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17)*

Come as people who are broken, who have made mistakes, who seek healing.

We hear the inner voice of God inviting us to return.

Come, listen to Christ's invitation to repent from brokenness.

We come to mark the beginning of the Lenten season, seeking the Spirit's guidance for our deepening and for our growing.

Come and commune with God as we pray:

We know you love us completely and unconditionally, O God. We also know you worry about our decisions and wait for us to turn back to you. We are gathered in worship committing anew to embrace love, to mourn wrong decisions and subsequent brokenness, and to find your path of self-giving once more. Equip us and strengthen us for this journey of becoming, we pray. Amen.

Hymn: VU 108 "Throughout these Lenten days and nights" vs. 1, 3, 4

Invitation to Observe a Lenten Discipline

Prayer of Confession (based on Psalm 51)

Words of Assurance

Thanks be to God. Amen.

A Time of Lament

A Prayer of Many Voices: *(Adapted from one Written by Gord Waldie, Lent-Easter 2009 Gathering)*

Voice 1:

O God how long?

All: We wait with hope, we trust in the promise.

Voice 2:

O God how long?

All: We wait with hope, we trust in the promise.

Voice 3:

O God how long?

All: We wait with hope, we trust in the promise.

Voice 4:

O God how long?

All: We wait with hope, we trust in the promise.

Voice 5:

O God how long?

All: We wait with hope, we trust in the promise.

Voice 6:

O God how long?

All: We wait with hope, we trust in the promise.

And the people all said,

All: Amen.

An Offering of Tears

On the tear-shaped piece of paper, you are invited to write or draw something that represent your tears, your laments, or ways in which you separate yourself from God. Then on the reverse side, write down what you need from God or from others or what positive change you might make. Keep the tears for later in the service.

(Some music for reflection and for writing)

Prayer of Tears *(based on Lamentations 2: -18-19).*

Cry aloud to the Lord! Let tears stream down like a torrent.

We yearn to do away with our burdens of sin, our tears of injustice and of oppression.

Arise and cry out in the night! Pour out your heart like water in God's presence.

We listen for God's grace-filled answer, praying for relief from inner wilderness.

Here, accept our sorry and our repentance, O God.

Here, O Christ, accept our repentance as we offer our tears to you.

(Moment of Sacred Rest)

God Speaks to Us in Word

Scripture Reading: Lamentations 3: 17-26

Hymn: MV 79 "Spirit, Open My Heart"

(Moment of Sacred Rest)

God Invites Us to Respond

Offering of our Tears

You are invited to symbolically put your lament and tears in a bowl.

The Cross of our Repentance

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Give God your thanks and praise.

It is right to give God our thanks and our praise.

Let us pray together.

You have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and our penitence. May we remember that it is only in Christ we live. May this cross remind us of God's call to repentance. Amen.

(Anoint yourself or the person beside you, on the forehead or on the back of your hand).

You may say: **"Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return"**.

Blessing:

Hymn: VU 586 "We Shall Go Out"

Commissioning:

We are marked by the cross of Christ.

We bear that cross to remember whose we are.

We have committed to discipleship in love.

We live that love by the power of the Spirit.

We carry God's blessings as forgiveness and as faith.

**Let us go and proclaim, in word and in deed,
the gospel of courageous love.**

Postlude