

Welcome

Ash Wednesday and Lent- some explanation.

Lighting the candle.

Prayer of awareness.

It is in the depths of life that we find you
At the heart of this moment
At the centre of our soul
Deep in the earth and its eternal stirrings.
You are the ground of all being
The Well-spring of time
Womb of the earth
The Seed-force of stars.
And so in the evening of this day
we wait
not for blessings from afar
but for You
the very Soil of our soul.

John Philip Newell

A contemporary reading:

“I did not know I was on a search for passionate aliveness. I only knew I was lonely and lost and that something was drawing me deeper beneath the surface of my life in search of meaning. There is a hunger in people to go to those deep depths; to know that our lives are sacred; that our hearts are truly capable of love. It is a yearning to be all the we can be. A longing for what is real.”

Anne Hillman: The Dancing Animal Woman

A prayer for Ash Wednesday.

We yearn to grow strong and tall,

Rooted deeply

In your love.

We yearn for the healing of old wounds,

Soothing of hurts

Of conflict and loss.

We yearn to grow ripe fruit

In our daily lives,

Love, peace and joy.

We yearn to feel

At home in our world,

Recognising God in all,
Becoming all we can be.

**We bring our yearning to you now,
To your encircling love,
Who knows the seasons of our hearts,
In whom we live and move.**

Service of the Ashes

The Ashes.

Ash Wednesday invites us to come back to earth. To wonder at the gift of life, my life, our life with the earth, the shared body of our existence. These ashes were once trees and shrubs, and places where life was lived to its fullest. Once they were full of life.. Now they are black and grey. Dry. Lifeless. But mixed with oil of healing and water of our baptism they make good fertiliser; it will help the seeds of the gospel take deeper root in us and bring forth the fruits, the harvest of justice, peace and generosity. These are ashes worth wearing. For from the burnt ashes will spring the green shoot of life and the purple flower of attentiveness to God.

Rex Hunt

Preparation of the ashes

Bless these ashes,

May they be for us a symbol of our return to the earth.

Bless us.

**May we be deeply grounded,
attentive to Your presence,
growing full with life. Amen**

Distribution

You are invited to give and receive the ashes to/from each other, on your forehead or the back of your hand. As we mark each other we say.....

“Receive the mark of our humanness.”

Prayer

You formed humanity from dust and to dust we will return.

Breathe life into us anew.

We are your people.

Breathe in us breath of God.

Prayer for the life of the world.

For everything that emerges from the earth

Thanks be to you, O God,

Holy Root of being

Sacred sap that rises

Full-bodied fragrance of earth's unfolding form.

May we know that we are of You

May we know that we are in You

May we know that we are one with You

Together one.

Guide us as communities to what is deepest

Open us as peoples to what is first

Lead us as a world to what is dearest

That we may know the holiness of wholeness

That we may learn the strength of humility

That together we may live close to the earth

And grow in grounded glory.

John Philip Newell

Looking forward through Lent

Traditionally Christians have given something up during Lent. You are invited to think now of something you could do during this time to grow the

“green shoot of life” or “the purple flower of attentiveness to God”.

Silence

Please take a plant home to nurture and remind you of your intention.....

Reading; Ephesians 3:17-19 Living Bible Translation

“May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvellous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.”

A Blessing from our tradition.

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God, and the
communion of the Holy Spirit
be with us all,
now and evermore.
Amen**



“Evening Prayers” will be held throughout Lent
at Jenny and Paul’s house 26A Connaught
Terrace, Brooklyn. If you need a lift, please
contact Fiona fionaredsquirrel@gmail.com
You are welcome to join us.

Ash Wednesday –an explanation

Lent and Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent. It falls forty days before Easter. Ash Wednesday takes its name from ashes, a traditional Jewish sign of penitence. In some liturgical traditions, palm fronds or palm crosses from the previous year's Palm Sunday are burned, and then the ashes are applied to the worshipper's forehead on Ash Wednesday as a token of their commitment to observe a "holy Lent".

Lent is a season for reflection and taking stock. It originated in the very earliest days of the church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days.

(Explorefaith.org)

