

St Andrew's on The Terrace

Lent Contemplations - Tree of Life



Ash Wednesday Service

Welcome

Lighting the candle.

*We remember the people
of Christchurch*

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

Tree of life

And you are a tree of life
roots digging down deep into the fiery heat of the cosmos
branches stretching out to envelop the whole sky

On your body grow the healing leaves
that salve the wounds of the nations.
The fruits of the spirit glisten on your bough

We draw near and find shelter under your
towering, gnarled limbs;
rest for our weariness
shade for our overheated passions
cool shade for our over stimulated senses

Your trunk bears up the weight of the world's sorrowing
struck by lightening
lashed by storms and rain
eaten by insects and worms
pruned, sawn and ravaged by humans

Still you stand, resplendent in your ageless beauty
Glorious in the apparel of each season
There is room for all in your girth
you reject none, spider and beetle,
bird and cat, antelope and zebra
hunter and hunted find shelter here
wise one and fool

Good and evil alike may eat of your fruit
you do not judge
absorbing the toxins of our maliciousness
converting them into goodness
offering the juice of your loveliness for our renewal
and pleasure.

For you are a tree of life
and we come to you seeking a home

Nicola Slee

silence

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.

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.

Preparation of the ashes

Blessing

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 both
the

“green shoot of life”

and

“the purple flower of attentiveness to God”.

Please take a plant home to remind you of your choice.....

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

Lent Contemplations will be held in the church every Wednesday at 5.30 pm during Lent. They will be led by a different people from our community sharing the theme of "Tree of Life".

You are welcome to join us.

