

St Stephens Williamstown Uniting Church in Australia



Ash Wednesday Service at Home 17th February 2021 – 7:30PM

*Gather some Ash and Water ready for the Imposition of Ashes
Bible marked with Readings, Access to YouTube (click on Links provided), and Be Still*

Gathering of the People of God

Musical Interlude: Abide with me <https://youtu.be/6UB1CGOsIE>

Gathering & Welcome

God be with you. **And also with you.**

Acknowledgment to Country

We gather on the land of the First Nations Peoples, the Traditional Caretakers, from time immemorial. I pay my respects to their Elders: past, present, and emerging.

Scripture Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-13

Words about Ash Wednesday and Lent

Compassion for the Body of Christ, renewing of our hearts and lives, and prayers for our communities, the Church, the world, and you, is our focus and reflection this week and for Lent. We begin our Lenten discipline with our Ash Wednesday worship service, journeying as a community of Jesus' disciples with others, and as individuals in our personal life in Christ, with Mother God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Ash Wednesday begins the Christian season of Lent.

We will spend the coming days journeying with Jesus toward the cross; toward the death that ultimately brings resurrection life.

Tonight, we come together to mark the beginning of this Lenten journey. Together we acknowledge our sin, to acknowledge our mortality. We come together to glimpse the Christ who offers forgiveness, who offers everlasting life.

I invite you, therefore, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word.

Let us begin this season with God in the right way.

Let us now receive the reminder of our mortal nature with prayer and gratitude for God's redeeming work.

Opening Prayer

Holy, holy, holy God

We place ourselves in your presence; resting in your promised grace.

Our minds and our spirits are cluttered: with thoughts of covid, future lockdown, thoughts and feelings that distract our attention away from you, our God.

Let us unclench our fists, release all tension, and release all things:

Silence

We release all that we have done today.

We release all that we feel we should have done today, but did not.

We release all that we need to do tomorrow.

We release our fear, release our anxiety, impatience and pride.

All that we think and feel that distracts us from you, God, we release!

Silence

Fill us now with the joy and peace of your deep abiding presence.

We offer our brokenness and all of ourselves to you,

Our God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. **Amen.**

Song: With these Ashes – Kathy Douglass

<https://soundcloud.com/user-693618678/with-these-ashes>

Imposition of Ashes

The Receiving of Ashes

Creator God,

You are eternal, we are mortal,
formed from the dust of the earth.

As we receive these ashes,
make them a sign for us
of repentance and a returning to you.
Breathe in us again the breath of life.

Blessed be God for ever and ever. Amen.

Play 'With These Ashes' Click/Copy & Paste in the Browser of your PC or Device

<https://soundcloud.com/user-693618678/with-these-ashes>

Come, receive the sign of ashes.

Mark your forehead or hand with the sign of the cross.

Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return. **Amen.**

Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

**O God of Life, we confess the ways we turn away from the
fullness of life you offer. [Silence]**

God of Love, we confess the hatred we hold in our hearts. [Silence]

God of Compassion, we confess our indifference. [Silence]

**God of Justice, we confess that our lives are linked to oppressive
systems. [Silence]**

**God of Peace, we confess the violent movements of our hearts,
the violent realities of our world. [Silence]**

Holy God, we confess our sins to you. [Silence]

Assurance of Pardon

Return to the Lord your God:

God who is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love.

Turn toward your God in the assurance that in Jesus Christ,
'your sins are forgiven.' **Amen.**

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Silence

Prayer for Guidance

Generous God who fills the earth with abundance:
the Oceans and Skies full of water,
Fields that yield Food, Flowers and Birdsong and Beauty,
May we live with generous hearts, with open hands.

Song: Abide With Me (v. 1) <https://youtu.be/9xVHG7WywwI>

*Abide with me, fast falls the eventide
The darkness deepens Lord, with me abide
When other helpers fail and comforts flee
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me*

Humble God who became flesh and entered into our humanity;
who touched the untouchable, spoke to the outcasts,
washed the disciples' feet,
May we live with humble hearts, looking always to the needs of others.

Song: Abide With Me (v. 2) <https://youtu.be/9xVHG7WywwI>

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away
Change and decay in all around I see
O Thou who changest not, abide with me*

Righteous God, who longs for us to be in relationship with you;
through sincere prayer, fasting, worship, scripture reading, fellowship;
May we love you with all of our hearts, minds, and souls.

Song: Abide With Me (v. 3) <https://youtu.be/9xVHG7WywwI>

*I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness*

*Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.*

Walk with us on this Lenten journey, Lord.
Give us eyes to see the path you would have us take.
Give us ears to hear the truth you would speak to us.
Give us the wisdom to store our treasure with you,
so that our hearts may abide in your perfect peace. Amen.

Song: Abide With Me (v. 4) <https://youtu.be/9xVHG7WywwI>

*Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee
In life, in death, o Lord, abide with me
Abide with me, abide with me.*

Silence

Blessing/Dismissal

Return to the Lord your God for you are blessed.
Be merciful and compassionate,
Be patient, full of faithful love and rejoice in God!
Go in peace and live your Lenten journey. **Amen.**

Acknowledgements

Presider – Rev S. Juliette Maua'i
Adapted Resources for Ash Wednesday Spacious Faith
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