

ASH WEDNESDAY SCRIPT

PRELUDE

*OPENING HYMN

Come Ye Sinners Poor and Needy #340

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
full of pity, love, and power.

Refrain:

**I will arise and go to Jesus;
he will embrace me with his arms;
in the arms of my dear savior;
O there are ten thousand charms**

Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify.
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings you high.
(Refrain)

Come ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.
(Refrain)

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth is
To feel your need of him.
(Refrain)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Reader #1:

We live in a world of deadlines, notifications and alerts.

We live in a clock-ticking, cell phone ringing and pinging world.

We find ourselves rushing around at a break-neck pace
trying to accomplish overwhelming tasks day after day...

What does it cost to be so busy?

Piano begins to play softly "Come and Find the Quiet Center". The the reader then continues to read while the pianist continues to play.

This is Lent. Let us fast from hurry. Let us fast from worry. Let us turn to God. Let us come and find a quiet center.

SONG "Come and Find the Quiet Center" 1st verse

*Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,
Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see
All the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.*

CATCHING OUR BREATH

Pianist continues to quietly play during the next reading and prayer.

Reader#2

I invite you to take a deep breath...

[take a moment to breathe in and out slowly] Reader #2 then continues...

Reader #2:

If you have a watch on, I invite you to take it off for this time of worship.

If you have a phone, I invite you to turn it off or put it away now.

If that makes you very anxious, that's OK.

Just notice the feeling and give it some thought.

As Lent begins, let these simple acts (or maybe not-so-simple acts)

be a sign of the commitment to give ourselves a break,

to give ourselves just a moment to catch our breath,

to give our *selves* time to give God attention.

PRAYER

Let us pray a “prayer for clearing out...”

Forgiving God, we are not sure we can slow down.

Help us *make* room for You.

We have too often crowded you out, too busy even to make a change.

Help us *find* room for You.

We come to you wanting it to be different.

Let us *be* room for You.

In the name of Jesus, who invites us to wholeness.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE Psalm 51:1-4, 8-12

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;

- let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
⁹ Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE

The Grace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all God's benefits.

Who forgives all our sins and heals all our infirmities,

Who redeems our life from the pit,

And crowns us with mercy and loving-kindness.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

It is to You we come this night, O God,

because You are a God who loves us

and a God who calls us to righteous and holy living.

Have mercy on us; cleanse our hearts this night of hidden sins that have alienated us from You and from each other.

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

Lord, we repent for the times when we have been too busy for You.

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

Lord, forgive us for the times when we have been too busy to take care of ourselves.

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

Lord, we repent of any shortcomings that have affected our family members. Forgive us if we have failed to treat them with kindness and respect and have been too busy to let them know how much we love them.

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

Lord, we pray for our friends and anything that we might have done to hurt them.

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

Lord, we pray for those who touch our lives each day; let us remember to treat them how You would treat them. Forgive us if we have been too busy and failed to be a witness of your love.

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

Lord, we pray for our church family; draw us closer to one another. Forgive us if we have hurt each other or have taken each other for granted.

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

Lord, we pray for our enemies. We never meant to have enemies. Forgive us for the pain You must feel in these broken relationships. Heal our brokenness.

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

O God, thank You for meeting us here, where we are. You are faithful, even when we are faithless. You come to reconcile us to each other and to yourself. It is in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

RECEPTION OF ASHES

HYMN "Grace Greater Than Our Sin" #365

- 1) Marvelous grace of our loving Lord;
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvery's mount out poured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Refrain:

**Grace, grace God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!**

- 2) Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater, yes grace untold,
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.
(Refrain)

- 3) Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.
What can a vail to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,
Brighter than snow you may be today.
(Refrain)

- 4) Marvelous, infinite matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see his face,
Will you this moment his grace received?
(Refrain)

Benediction