**Ash Wednesday**

Today is Ash Wednesday – the first day of Lent. Historically, by the fourth century the Western church had determined that the Lenten period of fasting and renewal should correspond to Christ’s forty-day fast (Matt. 4:2), and, by counting forty days back from Easter (excluding Sundays, which remain “feast” days), arrived at the Wednesday seven weeks before Easter. Ash Wednesday, therefore, became the day that marked the beginning of the Lenten renewal.

The aim of Ash Wednesday worship is threefold: to contemplate our mortality, sinfulness, and need of a savior; to renew our commitment to daily repentance in the Lenten season and in all of life; and to remember with confidence and gratitude that Christ has conquered death and sin.

The imposition of ashes (on the forehead) is often a central part of the worship service. Ashes have a long history in biblical and church traditions. In Scripture ashes, or dust, symbolize frailty or death (Gen. 18:27), sadness or mourning (Esther 4:3), judgment (Lam. 3:16), and repentance (Jon. 3:6). All these images are caught up in the church’s use of ashes as a symbol appropriate for Lent.

**Instructions for the Imposition of “Ashes”**:

You are invited to come forward for the imposition of ashes. The ashes will be made into a cross on your forehead. If however, you are not comfortable receiving the ashes, please pick-up a sticker on the table in the entry way and during the imposition time place the sticker over your heart.

United Church

of Canistota

Service of Worship

Ash Wednesday

March 2, 2022

7:30 pm



*“Ash Wednesday” from Anglican Diocese of Dunedin, New Zealand*

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
But if we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness."- 1 John 1:8-9

**Gathering**

Call to Worship – “Lord You Are Here” by Tony Horsfall

 Congregational Hymn\* #363

 Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

 1 John 1:8-9

 Response: Just As I Am #387 v. 1

 Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Response: Just As I Am #387 v. 2

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Response: Just As I Am #387 v. 3 & 4

Prayer of Confession:

 P: Most Merciful God,

C: **We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

P: We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

C: **We confess to you, O Lord.**

P: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

C: **We confess to you, O Lord.**

P: Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

C: **We confess to you, O Lord.**

P: Our excessive love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

C: **We confess to you, O Lord.**

P: Our laxity in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

C: **We confess to you, O Lord.**

P: Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

C: **Accept our repentance, O Lord.**

P: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

C: **Accept our repentance, O Lord.**

P: For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

C: **Accept our repentance, O Lord.**

P: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

C: **Hear our prayer, O Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen**

 Children’s Message

 Confessional Hymn #408

 I Surrender All

**Proclamation & Response**

Psalm 51:1-12

Reflection

Pastoral Prayer & The Lord’s Prayer (*in unison*)

 **Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.**

**Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our sins, As we forgive those who have sinned against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever**

**Amen.**

The Imposition of “Ashes”

 *You are invited to come forward for the imposition of ashes.*

 *If you prefer not to receive the ashes, Please place the sticker over*

 *your heart during this time*

**Sending Forth**

 Words of Assurance

 Sending Hymn\* #255

 Jesus Paid It All

 Benediction\*