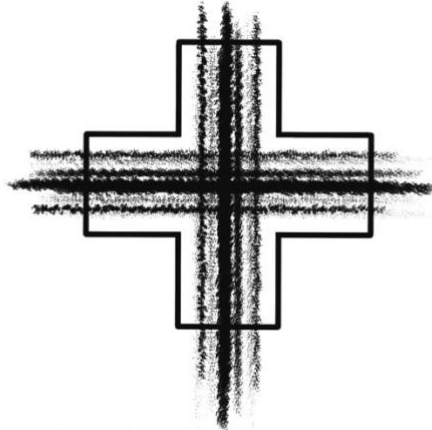


# Ash Wednesday 2021

## Activities Booklet



## ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday is an important day in the life of the church, this year it is on February 17<sup>th</sup> 2021. While we cannot gather physically, we will mark the day sharing in a service on Facebook at 9.30am, join in prayer together at home, taking time to reflect on what we would like to confess and be forgiven for.

Below are a number of activities below that you might like to do to help you reflect and mark the start of Lent at home. Maybe one of them will be helpful to you.

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

Lent is a time when we, as individuals and as a community of faithful Christians, remember who we are: earthly creatures with a mortal body, who are living in a world which is also limited by time and mortality, but who are called to an earthly pilgrimage of following our crucified, risen and ascended Lord.

A journey where we often stumble and sin, and yet can still be forgiven and grow closer to God.

The words used when we are marked with ashes (often from the Palm crosses of the previous year) remind us of the journey of our Lenten pilgrimage.

This year, though we cannot gather together on Ash Wednesday to be physically marked with Ash, we can still share in the journey and seek to grow in our closeness to Christ. Let's walk this journey in faith, hope and love of our Lord and in so doing, may we grow in grace and humility.

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

## Suggested Activities

### **Washing Hands**

This year we have been washing and sanitising our hands a lot. Singing a few verses of a Lenten hymn might be a good accompaniment to handwashing.

**Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
forgive our foolish ways;  
re clothe us in our rightful mind;  
in purer lives your service find,  
in deeper reverence praise,**

**Breathe through the heats of our desire  
your coolness and your balm;  
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire,  
speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,  
O still small voice of calm, O still small voice of calm!**

Washing (which we have been doing all year as a commitment to preserve life) is also a sign of our sorrow for sins and reminds us of God's promise to wash away and forgive our sins.

As a prayerful activity you could pray from the psalms while you wash your hands:

**Pray**

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

**Amen**

[From Psalm 51]

## **A Walk**

As we enter the season of Lent, we desire to follow Jesus, to grow in discipleship and in faith. It is not just personal sins we repent of, but also a recognition that being human means to be imperfect.

To be part of a community is to be part of a community that is not perfect.

If you are outside, or going for a walk, look for paths that others have trodden. See the footprints of different people, there might be more than one track, coming together then diverging, crossing over, or joining up.

*How will you choose which to follow?*

*Which footprints will be your guide?*

*How can we try to make sure it is Christ's footsteps we are following?*

## **Planting Seeds**

Find some soil and plants...

In your garden or in the park, look at all the dead leaves, plants, twigs which are part of the soil, and gradually breaking it down to make it good to grow new plants. Our world depends on everything that has lived becoming dust and a fertile place for new life to grow.

If this is your garden, you may want to clear some weeds, or even plant a bulb, or sow some seeds. If you have a pot of compost you may want a plant to put in it and watch it grow during Lent. We are reminded of the cycle of life, that

new life and hope can come out of mess and chaos, and that death is not the end.

*What do you want or need to grow good spiritual roots and be revitalised?  
How might you help those roots to grow this Lent?*

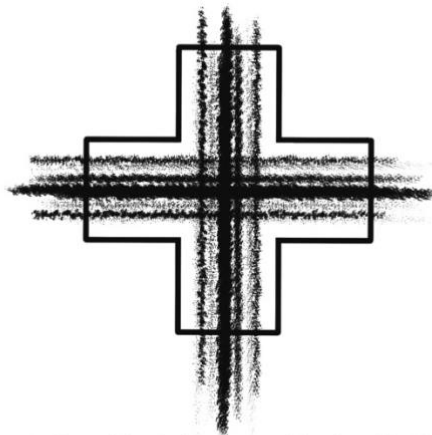
## **Dust**

Run your finger along a windowsill, cupboard or bookshelf, perhaps you will find some dust there? Or maybe you can scoop up some dirt from outside.

*As you look at your dirty hands, bring to mind those things you want to say sorry to God for, and offer them in prayer.*

Remember that you are human and will make mistakes, but God promises to hear and accept our repentance, and then forgive us, washing us clean and giving us a fresh slate.

Wash the dirt off your hands and give thanks for God's forgiveness.



ASH WEDNESDAY