

Ash Wednesday Service: *Let down your hearts*

Visual center:

A rolled dark cloth is attached to a standing cross (will be unrolled during service)
A low central table is covered with a gray cloth; on the table are several clay saucers filled with ash as well as a fire-proof container filled with strips of balsam wood (for burning)
Lights are low as people enter and are seated in a circle around central table

Prelude While I keep silence STS 66 (flute or other wind instrument)

Opening words Psalm 130:1-6 (may be memorized)

1 Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord.

2 **Lord, hear my voice!**

Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

1 If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins,
who could stand?

2 **But with you there is forgiveness;
and for that we revere you.**

1 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in God's word I put my hope.

2 **My soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,**

1 & 2 ***more than those who watch for the morning.***

Silence

Descent of cloth: Dark cloth on cross is slowly unrolled, descending to the floor

Song

Let down your hearts to the Lord; we let them down to God.

Prayer

Leader Holy God,
we have looked for you in high places
and among the mighty and strong;
we have looked for you in complex theologies
and among the accomplished and learned;
we have looked for you in the security of wealth
and among the rich and comfortable;
we have even looked for you in our churches,
among our revered traditions and our lofty achievements.

Song

Let down your hearts to the Lord; we let them down to God.

Prayer of confession

Leader But you, O God, are not to be found in exalted places.
Instead you draw us inward and downward
to the depths,
to the core,
to the earth's core
where the fire will consume our falseness,
and where the flame of hope yet lights a way
to Christ, our Savior, who suffered and died,
becoming nothing for love of us,
so that we might truly live—
beloved daughters and sons,
wise and simple,
holy and true.

Let us go down to the depths,
to the still center,
to the empty, spacious silence.

Silence

Burning of wood at central table

Silence

Ritual of ashes (in silence)

Two leaders approach table; each marks the sign of the cross with ash on the back of the other's hands; they walk silently to the cross and bow from the waist or kneel, with arms crossed over chest; they return to their seats.
Other participants approach the table in pairs and repeat the same action.

Words of assurance: Psalm 130: 7-8

1 People of God, hope in the Lord!
2 **For with the Lord there is unfailing love,**
1 & 2 **and with our God is great power to redeem.**

Lights come up

Song

The musical notation is written on a single staff in treble clef. It is divided into two parts: 'Leader' and 'Congregation'. The 'Leader' part consists of four measures with notes G4, A4, B4, and C5, with chords C, Em, F, and G indicated above. The 'Congregation' part consists of four measures with notes G4, A4, B4, and C5, with chords G, F, G, and C indicated above. The lyrics 'Lift up your hearts to the Lord; we lift them up to God' are written below the staff.

Dismissal "Amazing grace" HWB 143 (flute or other wind instrument plays as people depart)

Acknowledgements (permission is granted for congregational use)

Service designed by Marlene Kropf and Rosanna McFadden

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Prayer of confession inspired by Alison Norris, *Women in Theology* Liturgy