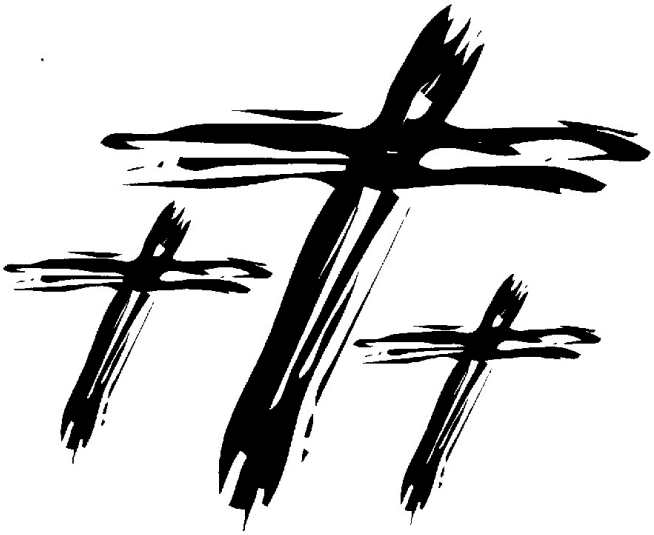
St Matthew-in-the-City

Ash Wednesday



10th February 2016
12:20pm

Today is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.

Ashes were used in biblical times
as a sign of mourning and penitence.

This afternoon's service is a penitential service
marking the start of our Lenten journey.

You will have the opportunity to receive ashes
in the sign of the cross on your forehead.

The sign of the cross reminds us that we belong to Christ,
the ashes are a mark of our repentance,
and a reminder of our mortality.

The ashes are made from the burning
of last year's palm crosses.

This service is adapted from
the Church of England Common Worship.

CALL TO WORSHIP

E te whanau a te Karaiti, every year at Easter,
we celebrate the triumph of Love
through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration
and to practice with discipline daily turning to God,
listening and waiting upon the source and power of our living.
We begin this season by acknowledging our mortality,
our ultimate powerlessness,
and our ultimate reliance upon the ever-potent Love called God.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Everloving God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all who are penitent;
create in us new and contrite hearts,
so that when we turn to you and confess our sins
we may receive your full and perfect forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.
Amen.

READINGS

Isaiah 58:1-12

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

HOMILY

LITANY OF PENITENCE

We begin our journey to Easter
with the sign of ashes, an ancient sign,
speaking of the frailty and uncertainty of human life,
and marking the penitence of the community as a whole.

Holy God, our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin
bring us healing and make us whole in Jesus Christ.

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart,
and mind, and strength.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.
E te ariki, kia aroha mai

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us.
E te karaiti, kia aroha mai

We confess all our past unfaithfulness:
the pride, hypocrisy and impatience of our lives.
E te ariki, kia aroha mai

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways,
and our exploitation of other people.
E te karaiti, kia aroha mai

Our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves
and our lack of care for those who have less than us.
E te ariki, kia aroha mai

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts
and our dishonesty in daily life and work.
E te karaiti, kia aroha mai

Accept our repentance, for the wrongs we have done,
for our blindness to human need and suffering,
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty.
E te ariki, kia aroha mai

For all false judgements,
for uncharitable thoughts towards our neighbours
and for our prejudice and contempt towards those
who differ from us.
E te karaiti, kia aroha mai

For our waste and pollution of your creation
and our lack of concern for those who come after us.
E te ariki, kia aroha mai

Silence is kept.

Forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.

BLESSING OF THE ASHES

Everloving God,
from the dust of the earth you have created us.
May these ashes be for us a sign
of our mortality and penitence,
and a reminder of your precious gifts of life and hope.
Amen.

Those who desire to receive ashes come forward,
and the ashes are applied to the forehead of each person
with the following words:

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

After all who desire ashes have received them,
the priest offers absolution

God the creator brings you new life
forgives and redeems you.
Take hold of this forgiveness
and live your life
in the Spirit of Jesus.

Amen.

The service continues with the Peace on page 485 NZPB