

Ash Wednesday  
 Community/Staff Prayer  
 Change Your Mind



Artwork by Dorothy Woodward rsj

**Preparation:**

*We are seated in a circle (if possible) around the Scripture which rests on the Prayer focus and lies open at the Reading for today. There is also a bowl with some ashes. A prayer leaflet is provided and a laptop with internet access arranged.*

**WE GATHER**

**Gathering Song:** Return to God (Marty Haugen)

Access this song at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuzHsp7eCF8>

All may join in the Refrain: Return to God with all your heart,  
 the source of grace and mercy;  
 Come seek the tender faithfulness of God.

**Opening Prayer:**

Leader: Let us pray ... (pause) ...

All: God of abundant grace and loving forgiveness,  
 in these weeks of Lent we return to you with all our hearts.  
 We acknowledge we are fragile and need your strength.  
 Break the chains of oppression that bind us.  
 Change our minds that we may put on the mind of Christ.  
 We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**WE LISTEN**

**Scripture Focus:** Joel 2: 12-13

**Breaking Open The Word /Reflection:**

*The Leader reflects as follows. If desired, the group may then take time in silence to reflect on the following points:*

- If I were to 'change my mind' by putting on the mind of Christ, would there be any difference in how I perceive my own weaknesses and/or the weaknesses of others?
- How could the 'ashes' of my life become nourishment for a new life to develop and grow from within?
- Spend some quiet moments allowing God's gracious mercy touch the parts of me that seem to have been destroyed and are lying in ashes ... Simply let God be there in the ashes of your life.

*After some time for silence and/or sharing, the Leader continues:*

## **WE RESPOND**

### **Ritual:**

**Leader:** The Sacred Word in Lent urges us to change our minds about a lot of things! Changing the way we think will always have a profound effect on our actions! We are called to put on the mind of Christ, to see the world through his eyes, to walk in the light of truth. Jesus is our way to life!

### **Distribution of Ashes**

*The Leader takes the bowl of ashes (a few drops of water have been added so that they will stick) and says:*

**Leader:** Let us take time now to be signed with ashes.  
While EACH person is being signed with the cross,  
let us pray that they will be strengthened with courage  
to 'change their mind' and put on the mind of Christ.

*The Leader moves to each person and traces the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads with the ashes, saying:*

Out of the ashes of your life, you will rise.  
Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.

**Participant:** Amen.

## **WE GO**

### **Conclusion:**

**Leader:** Let us pray ... *(pause for silent prayer)*  
**All:** Loving God,  
You draw us ever near.  
You invite us to begin a new way of living in the truth.  
May we allow your grace to change our minds this Lent  
and may your light shine brightly on our steps.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

### **Blessing**

**Leader:** May God who is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love  
keep us safe from all harm and bless us with strength for the journey.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** May Christ, the human face of God, fill our minds with lasting peace.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** May the Spirit of God illumine our path and guide our steps.

**All:** Amen.

Leader: May almighty God bless us + the Father, and the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Dismissal

Leader: Let us encourage one another on the journey to Easter with a Sign of Peace.

All: Peace be with you.

*There may be videos in our online video library relevant to this theme. To check availability please select the video menu on our homepage menu bar.*

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