

HOLY INNOCENTS FALLOWFIELD

February 18th, 2026

Ash Wednesday - The First Day of Lent

Please be as still and silent as possible as we prepare together to celebrate the Eucharist. When the bell rings, please stand and turn to face the back of the church.

The choir sings the first verse of the Lent Prose (see hymn 507).

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

The president introduces the service:

Brothers and sisters in Christ: since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection.

It became the custom of the Church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting. At first this season of Lent was observed by those who were preparing for baptism at Easter and by those who were to be restored to the Church's fellowship from which they had been separated through sin. In course of time the Church came to recognise that,

by a careful keeping of these days,
all Christians might take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to the Lord.

We are invited, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

Cast your burden upon the Lord and he will sustain you.

**Create in us clean hearts, O God:
and renew a right spirit within us.**

Cast us not away from your presence:
and take not your Holy Spirit from us.

Give us the joy of your saving help:
sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.

Blessed be the Lord, day by day:
the God of our salvation.



Let us pray for the grace to keep Lent faithfully.

After a short time of silent prayer, the president says the collect for Ash Wednesday. At the end: **Amen.**

The procession moves down the aisle as we continue to sing hymn 507. As the president reaches the lower sanctuary step, all are invited to move to stand around the sanctuary, or to kneel on the lower step if they wish.

Make our hearts clean, O God.

And renew a right spirit within us.

Father eternal,
giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought, in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.

We have wounded your love and marred your image in us.

We are sorry and ashamed, and repent of all our sins.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,

forgive us all that is past and lead us out of darkness

to walk as children of light. Amen.

Our Lord Jesus Christ called upon the cities of Galilee to repent in sackcloth and ashes. As a sign of the spirit of penitence with which we shall keep this season of preparation for Easter,

I invite you to receive on your head in ash the sign of the cross, the symbol of our salvation.

A short time of silence is kept. The ash is blessed:

God our Father, you create us from the dust of the earth:

grant that these ashes may be for us a sign of our penitence and a symbol of mortality; for it is by your grace alone

that we receive eternal life in Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

All who wish to, receive the ashes and then return to their seats.

At the imposition the minister says to each person:

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

When everyone who wishes has received the ashes and returned to their places, there will be a time of silent prayer, then the president says the absolution.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Ministry of the Word follows.

FIRST READING Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near- a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come. Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

At the end: This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN 69 Please remain seated or kneel to join in.

SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

At the end: This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand for the Gospel Acclamation:



Praise to you O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Praise to you O Christ, King of eternal glory.

A pure heart create for me, O God,

and give me again the joy of your salvation.

Harden not your hearts today,

but listen to the voice of the Lord.

Praise to you O Christ, King of eternal glory.

GOSPEL READING Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end: This is the Gospel of the Lord:
Praise to you, O Christ.

Please SIT for the sermon. After the sermon there will be a time of silence. Then please remain seated or kneeling to join in:

**God to enfold us, Christ to uphold us,
Spirit to keep us in heaven's sight;
so may God's grace both heal and embrace us,
lead us through darkness, into light.....(repeated ad lib)**

Please stand. The president introduces THE PEACE:

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

All exchange a sign of peace and then please join in:

OFFERTORY HYMN 294

The bread and wine are brought to the altar. The president says a prayer over the gifts to which we all respond:

Blessed be God for ever.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER follows.

The Lord be with you: **and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts: **we lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

THE PRESIDENT continues the prayer, thanking God for his saving works, and then invites the people to join their praises with the whole company of heaven: and join with saints and angels for ever praising you and singing:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

THE PRESIDENT asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit to sanctify the bread and wine, and then repeats the Lord's own words over the bread and cup.Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died: Christ is risen: Christ will come again.

The president continues, joining our offering with Christ's sacrifice of himself. At the end of the prayer the president says:.....all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. Amen.

The President introduces the Lord's Prayer and all say together:

**Our Father who 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

We SIT or KNEEL as the president breaks the consecrated bread in pieces for all to share:

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**Though we are many we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**Jesus, Lamb of God have mercy on us
Jesus, bearer of our sins have mercy on us
Jesus, redeemer of the world give us your peace.**

The president addresses those who wish to come to Holy Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God,
who takes away the sin of the world.
Happy are those who are called to his supper.
**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

*Those who wish to receive Holy Communion approach the altar.
During communion please join in Hymn 59.
When all have received Holy Communion there will be a time of silent prayer. At the end of the silence all please STAND with the President.*

Almighty God, you have given your only Son
to be for us both a sacrifice for sin
and also an example of the godly life:
**give us grace that we may always
most thankfully receive these his inestimable gifts,
and also daily endeavour to follow
the blessed steps of his most holy life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**
Amen.

Please join in:

**Gracious God, my heart renew, make my spirit right and true;
Cast me not away from thee, let thy Spirit dwell in me;
thy salvation's joy impart, steadfast make my willing heart.**

**Sinners then shall learn from me and return, O God, to thee;
Saviour, all my guilt remove, and my tongue shall sing thy love;
Touch my silent lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall praise accord.**

**Not the formal sacrifice hath acceptance in thine eyes;
Broken hearts are in thy sight more than sacrificial rite;
Contrite spirit, pleading cries, thou, O God, wilt not despise.**

**Prosper Zion in thy grace and her broken walls replace;
Then our righteous sacrifice shall delight thy holy eyes;
Freewill offerings, gladly made, on thy altar shall be laid.**

A metrical setting of Psalm 51

Please remain standing for the blessing and dismissal.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

You believe God will not despise a broken spirit
and a contrite heart:

Amen.

You believe Christ bore your sins in his body on the tree;
you have been healed by his wounds.

Amen.

May he give you a spirit of repentance day by day,
pardon, peace and the assurance of sins forgiven:

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit,
rest upon you and remain with you
today and always.

Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ:

Thanks be to God.



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