



Thank you for joining us!

March 2, 2025

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Ash Wednesday
March 5, 2025 – 5:30pm

Prelude

Words of Gathering – from the Prophet Joel

Leader: 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.

We gather in the dimness of evening

**People: to be with the God who brightens
the shadows of our lives.**

Leader: We gather in the quiet of this place,

**People: to be with Jesus, knowing that nothing
past, present, or future separates us.**

Leader: We gather to be marked as disciples,

**People: to be fed for the journey through Lent,
to be sealed by the Spirit as God's own..**

Centering Silent Prayer and Music

You wait on this evening, Patient God, for us to come back: to stop going away from you on our self-focused travels; to set aside our empty fears; to cease shaping you in our image, so we can discover you closer than we ever dare imagined.

You wait for us this night, Companion of our hearts, for us to follow once more: leaving the shuttered corners of our lives; refusing to go

from one failed promise to another; coming out of the panic rooms we have built in our souls, so you can take us by the hand to lead us to resurrection life.

You wait in scattered ashes of our lives, Spirit of silence, for us to find you: in our sisters and brothers who are willing to hold us up when we falter, so you can embrace us with joy and hope in every moment.

Invitation to Observe a Holy Lent

Hymn of Intercession: *All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night* #675

Call to Confession

On this night, we begin our journey to Easter. Before we can take the first step, we must admit how we have not been faithful to our God. Let us pray together and in silence...

Prayer of Confession (unison)

We have trouble telling the truth, God of broken hearts, yet we must admit on this night how we have trouble being your people. We may not trample the poor, but we sometimes walk right past them. We don't receive bribes, but we are more privileged than many around us. We trust more in ourselves than in you, and spend far too much time patting ourselves on the back, rather than holding out a hand to others. Where can we go for forgiveness but to you, God of the ashes? When we are greedy, you promise to be gracious. When we have trouble confronting injustice, you stand at our side. When we struggle to seek good, you point us to Jesus, our Brother, our Savior, who shows us how

to turn our back on evil to follow him. Please hear our silent prayers.

Silent Prayer

Assurance of Forgiveness

Leader: God refuses to stand far off, but comes close to us – to hear our prayers, to touch our hearts with forgiveness, and to walk with us during this holy season and beyond.

People: We have no need to go anyplace else, but into the comforting and restoring heart of the One who loves us. Thanks be to God. We are forgiven. Amen.

Hymn: *We Are Forgiven* #447

Reading from the Psalter: Psalm 139: 7-12

Silent Reflection

Reading from the Gospels: Luke 18:9-14

Meditation

Imposition of Ashes

Unison Prayer:

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation, that we may show forth your glory in the world. By the cross and passion of our Savior, bring us with all your saints to the joy of Christ's resurrection. Amen.

Hymn: *Abide With Me* #836

Benediction

Postlude

675 All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night

1 All praise to thee, my God, this night, for all the
 2 For - give me, Lord, through Christ, I pray, the wrong that
 3 O may my soul on thee re - pose, and with sweet
 4 Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise God, all

bless - ings of the light! Keep me, O keep me
 I have done this day, that I, be - fore I
 sleep mine eye - lids close. Re - fresh my strength, for
 crea - tures here be - low; praise God a - bove, ye

safe from harm with - in the shel - ter of thine arm!
 sleep, may be at peace with neigh - bor, self, and thee.
 thine own sake, to serve thee well when I a - wake.
 heaven - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

**May be sung as a canon.*

Originally consisting of twelve stanzas, this was the bedtime hymn of the boys at Winchester School in England. Now it is one of the best-known evening hymns in English (usually matched with this tune and sung in canon), and its final stanza has taken on a life of its own.

We Are Forgiven

G Am D7 Gsus G C
 We are for - giv - en. We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to
 G Am7 Dsus D G Am
 God. Thanks be to God. We are for - giv - en.
 D7 Gsus G C G Am7 D G
 We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

To sing, rather than simply say, a response to the Declaration of Forgiveness has the effect of making the moment both more affirmative and more corporate. The musical repetition of the two sentences also strengthens awareness of what it means to be assured of God's pardon.

TEXT: Trad. liturgical text
 MUSIC: Hal H. Hopson, 1995
 Music © 1995 Hal H. Hopson

WE ARE FORGIVEN
 10.8.10.8

836

Abide with Me

1 A - bide with me: fast falls the e - ven - tide.
 2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;
 3 I need thy pres - ence ev - ery pass - ing hour;
 4 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
 5 Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes;

The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide!
 earth's joys grow dim; its glo - ries pass a - way;
 what but thy grace can foil the tempt - er's power?
 ills have no weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness.
 shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.

When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,
 change and de - cay in all a - round I see.
 Who, like thy - self, my guide and stay can be?
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy vic - to - ry?
 Heaven's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain shad - ows flee;

help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.
 O thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me.
 Through cloud and sun - shine, Lord, a - bide with me.
 I tri - umph still, if thou a - bide with me.
 in life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me.

By blending end of day and end of life, the imagery of this well-known Victorian hymn has made it valuable for both evening services and funerals. Although the author wrote his own music for it, the present tune has been firmly associated with this text for over 150 years.