



# Children of the Earth

## Annotated Leader's Edition

*The people gather in silence*

*Silence might not be your congregation's thing, so don't worry if people are restless. Consider Ash Wednesday and all of Lent a laboratory for your community to practice contemplation and see what happens.*

### *Reflection:*

*We are often reminded of our mortality when there's tragedy. Ash Wednesday is a moment to consider the treasure of human life without drama or fear. Our service tonight opens us to the reality that we are children of this earth and the love of our covenant God cannot leave us.*

A READING FROM PSALM 90:

*Not the entire psalm, but highlights to ground the evening.*

One: Our covenant God, you have been our home from one generation to another.

**Many: Before the mountains were made or the land of this earth was born, from age to age, you are God.**

One: You turn people to the earth and say, "Return, O children of earth."

**Many: For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday past, like a short night-watch:**

One: You sweep them away like a dream; they fade away suddenly like the grass.

**Many: In the morning, it is green and flourishes; in the evening, it is dried up and withered.**

One: So teach us to number our days so that we may cultivate hearts of wisdom.

**All: Fill us with your unfailing love in the morning so we can sing for joy and be glad all of our days.**

### GREETING

One: The Lord be with you

**Many: And also with you.**

### PRAYER

### WELCOME

*If your community would respond better with a welcome and greeting at the top of the service, feel free to make that change. If Ash Wednesday is new to your people, they may want some guidance as to how to think about the service.*

READING 1: Joel 2.1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58.1-12

*If you don't follow the lectionary, exchange for whatever texts are meaningful.*

READING 2: Psalm 51 (reading responsively)

One: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your perfect love.

**Many: In your great kindness, erase my mistakes.**

One: Wash me completely of my sin,

**Many: for I never forget my need for forgiveness.**

One: Against you alone have I sinned; I've failed you,

**Many: so you are justified to judge us.**

One: You desire truth and integrity to the core;

**Many: therefore transform me from within.**

One: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

**Many: Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

One: Let me hear joy and gladness; let this crushed body rejoice.

**Many: Forget my sins forever and erase all my mistakes.**

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew my spirit.

**Many: Please don't throw me out or take your holy spirit from me.**

One: Restore my joy and sustain my spirit.

**Many: Deliver us from violence, O God of healing, and we will cheer for your deliverance.**

One: Holy One, open my lips,

**Many: and my mouth will sound your praise.**

One: For you care nothing for sacrifices.

**Many: What you love is a broken spirit ready to change.**

One: You welcome a humble heart.

**Many: So bless your covenant people in your good pleasure, and rebuild the walls of the Holy City.**

## O Tender God, Have Mercy



O ten-der God, have mer-cy for you are for us

O liv-ing Christ, have mer-cy for you will heal us

O ten-der God, have mer-cy for you are for us

for you are for us

*A Kyrie song mashing up Psalm 51 with Romans 8. Sing three times through.*

READING 3: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6.10

READING 4: Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21

SERMON *A title like Children of the Earth or "Numbering Our Days" may be apt.*

SILENT REFLECTION

HYMN: Open Now Our Hearts To Wisdom (Psalm 90)  
Tune: BEACH SPRING *Or sing to another tune as you desire.*

Open now our hearts to wisdom  
Keep us numbering our days  
Generations long behind us  
Honored you, their dwelling place  
As a blink our life's duration  
Just a dream of yesterday  
Dust to dust our treasured lifetimes  
Age to age your perfect grace

We are children of our planet

We will all be quickly gone  
 Though we thrive with breath and heartbeat  
 Can we ever know how long  
 Open now our hearts to wisdom  
 Keep us numbering our days  
 Gladly mindful of eternity  
 Let us live a holy pace

You have been our sanctuary,  
 Faithful God, from age to age  
 Open now our hearts to wisdom  
 Keep us numbering our days  
 You a haven for our forebears  
 With the promise of your grace  
 Of our lives, God, make a legacy  
 For our children's children's faith

IMPOSITION OF ASHES *Describe the process well and invite people to take their time. Other meaningful songs may be added for time.*

## Children of the Earth

Psalm 90



Child - ren of the earth, we are child - ren of the earth. To the earth we are re -  
 Num - ber - ing our days, we are num - ber - ing our days, o - pen - ing our hearts to  
 God, from age to age, Ho - ly God from age to age you have been a sanc - tu -



turn - ing. Child - ren of the earth, we are child - ren of the earth.  
 wis - dom. Num - ber - ing our days, we are num - ber - ing our days,  
 ar - y. God, from age to age, Ho - ly God from age to age,

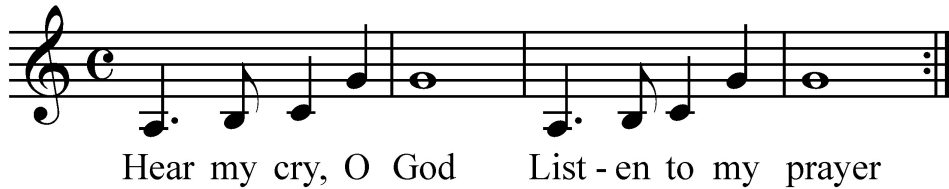


To the earth we are re - turn - ing. Mm - mm\_\_ Mm - mm\_\_  
 o - pen - ing our hearts to wis - dom.  
 you have been a sanc - tu - ar - y.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *Use this short antiphon to close each petition.*

Hear My Cry, O God

## Psalm 61



THE LORD'S PRAYER *If you desire.*

## SENDING SONG

*Close the service with a dismissal or let the “In God Alone” chant continue, inviting people to depart in silence when they are ready.*

# In God Alone

## Psalm 62



*In the spirit of Taizé and Iona, sing the chant between 3 and 33 times.*

## DISMISSAL

*Notes:*

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Texts for Psalm 51 and Psalm 90 adapted by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan.

*Thank you for using this service.  
I hope it serves to launch your community into a rich, creative Lenten season.*

**Richard**  
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