

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING FOR EARLY IN LENT

This text is intended for use early in Lent, such as Ash Wednesday, the First Sunday in Lent, or the first Sunday in March (if it falls within Lent).

It is used by the pastor while the congregation uses A Service of Word and Table II (UMH 13-15) or III (UMH 15-16) or one of the musical settings (UMH 17-25).

The pastor stands behind the Lord's table. See 28.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. *The pastor may lift hands and keep them raised.*

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Father Almighty (*almighty God*), creator of heaven and earth.

You brought all things into being and called them good.

From the dust of the earth you formed us into your image
and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

When rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights,
you bore up the ark on the waters, saved Noah and his family,
and made covenant with every living creature on earth.

When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights,
you gave us your commandments and made us your covenant people.

When your people forsook your covenant,
your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights;
and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

The pastor may lower hands.

**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 pastor may raise hands.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

When you gave him to save us from our sin,
your Spirit led him into the wilderness,
where he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry.
When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin, you raised him to life,

presented him alive to the apostles during forty days,
and exalted him at your right hand.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

Now, when we your people prepare for the yearly feast of Easter,
you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts,
that during these forty days of Lent we may be gifted and graced
to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

The pastor may hold hands, palms down, over the bread, or touch the bread, or lift the bread.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

The pastor may hold hands, palms down, over the cup, or touch the cup, or lift the cup.

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The pastor may raise hands.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving,
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

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

The pastor may hold hands, palms down, over the bread and cup.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

The pastor may raise hands.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (*God*), now and for ever.
Amen.