

Wednesday, February 17, 2021
Ash Wednesday, Year B

Introduction

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

Order of Worship

Ash Wednesday worship this year will be two-fold:

We offer a worship service in person, one service only, 7:30 pm, holy communion with the imposition of ashes. (Given Covid restrictions, participants of households will place the ashes on members of their own household or upon themselves.) These readings and prayers relate to the in person service offered at Grace.

For those not worshipping in person, Ashes to Go with a short devotional service are also offered. Materials are offered both Transfiguration Sunday in worship for those not returning on Ash Wednesday, and will be available outside the Stepping Stones entrance from Tuesday morning at 9 am through Friday school day, as long as the supply lasts. (50 sets; 2-4 people per set served)

***Confession and Forgiveness and the Imposition of Ashes**
(this part goes immediately after the Prelude this year)

In the name of the Father, and ✝ of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection.

**Most holy and merciful God,
we confess to you and to one another,
and before the whole company of heaven,
that we have sinned by our fault,
by our own fault,
by our own most grievous fault,
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done
and by what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart,
and mind, and strength.

We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We have shut our ears to your call to serve
as Christ served us.

We have not been true to the mind of Christ.

We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy,
and apathy that have infected our lives,

we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways,
and our exploitation of other
people, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our negligence in prayer and worship,
and our failure to share the faith that is in us,
we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our neglect of human need and suffering,
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,
we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our false judgments,
our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors,
and our prejudice and contempt toward those
who differ from us,
we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our waste and pollution of your creation,
and our lack of concern for those who come after us,
we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.
Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

Music: "Jesus, Remember Me" ELW 616

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.
May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us
that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life;
through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord., we pray.

Amen.

*Ashes will be distributed this year at your seats.
Take ash from the container held by the pastor
and place it on your forehead with the words,
"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
You may place ash on the head of someone in your household.*

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 your Son, our Savior,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,
strengthen us in all goodness,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

PSALM 32 – THE MESSAGE TRANSLATION

Mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD. (Ps. 32:10)

¹Count yourself lucky, how happy you must be—

 you get a fresh start,
 your slate's wiped clean.

²Count yourself lucky—

 GOD holds nothing against you
 and you're holding nothing back from him.

³When I kept it all inside,

 my bones turned to powder,
 my words became daylong groans.

⁴The pressure never let up;

 all the juices of my life dried up.

⁵Then I let it all out;

 I said, "I'll come clean about my failures to GOD."
 Suddenly the pressure was gone—
 my guilt dissolved,
 my sin disappeared.

⁶These things add up. Every one of us needs to pray;

 when all hell breaks loose and the dam bursts
 we'll be on high ground, untouched.

⁷GOD's my island hideaway,

 keeps danger far from the shore,
 throws garlands of hosannas around my neck.

⁸Let me give you some good advice;

 I'm looking you in the eye
 and giving it to you straight:

⁹"Don't be ornery like a horse or mule

 that needs bit and bridle
 to stay on track."

¹⁰God-defiers are always in trouble;

 GOD-affirmers find themselves loved
 every time they turn around.

¹¹Celebrate GOD.

 Sing together—everyone!
 All you honest hearts, raise the roof!

A The Word of the Lord.

C THANKS BE TO GOD.

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Prayers of Intercession

When I say, “Lord, in your mercy,” you respond, “**hear our prayer.**”

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence is kept as we gather our prayers.

O God, you call your church to be ministers of reconciliation throughout the world. Inspire your church in its proclamation of the gospel and guide its ministries to build up the body of Christ.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

O God, you created the earth and all its inhabitants, and you declared that it is good. Protect mountains and valleys, animals and plants, and direct us to be good stewards of all you have made.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

O God, you desire peace. Direct governments and leaders to work for the well-being of all people and raise up advocates to speak and serve on behalf of those with no voice.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

O God, you are our hope in the midst of despair, our help in the midst of sorrow, and our consolation in the midst of affliction. Grant comfort to all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit and support caregivers and frontline workers.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

O God, you are love, and you call us to love one another. Surround with your love all who prepare for baptism, and their families. Deal graciously with those who struggle to repent of past wrongs and set out on a new path of life.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

O God, you are our life and our salvation. We give you thanks for those who have died in faith. Inspire us by their example to proclaim your steadfast love.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Peace

As usual

Offering Prayer

Faithful God,

you walk beside us in desert places,

and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven.

Accompany us in this meal,

that we may pass over from death to life

with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Jesus draws the whole world to himself.

Come to this meal and be fed.

Prayer after Communion

God of steadfast love,

at this table you gather your people

into one body for the sake of the world.

Send us in the power of your Spirit,

that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new

in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

God bless you ✝ that you may be a blessing,

in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

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Prayers adapted by Interim Pastor Janet S. Peterman

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