

Ash Wednesday

March 2, 2022

Service of Word and Sacrament with Imposition of Ashes

*Indicates standing, as you are able

PRELUDE

Just As I Am, Without One Plea (Wood)

CANDLELIGHTING

*GREETING

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Congregation: **And also, with you.**

Pastor: Bless the Lord, who forgives all our sins.

Congregation: **God's mercy endures forever.**

* HYMN

Lord Who Throughout These Forty Days

(Verse 1, only)

1. Lord, who through-out these for-ty days for
2. As thou with Sa-tan didst con-tend, and
3. As thou didst hun-ger bear, and thirst, so
4. And through these days of pen-i-tence, and
5. A-bide with us, that so, this life of

us didst fast and pray, teach us with thee to
didst the vic-tory win, O give us strength in
teach us, gra-cious Lord, to die to self, and
through thy pas-sion-tide, yea, ev-er-more in
suf-fering o-ver past, an Eas-ter of un-

mourn our sins and close by thee to stay.
thee to fight, in thee to con-quer sin.
chief-ly live by thy most ho-ly word.
life and death, Je-sus, with us a-bide.
end-ing joy we may at-tain at last.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Sisters and brothers in Christ, the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion or suffering and his resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season, new believers to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sin and had separated themselves from the church or their community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness and restored to participation in the life of the Church. In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of Jesus Christ and in the faith of Christ's Church, to observe a holy Lent:

Congregation: We will observe a holy Lent through self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial, and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

Pastor: To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our human or mortal nature, let us now kneel in our pews or bow in our hearts before our Creator and Redeemer. (A moment is given to allow time to physically kneel, for those who so desire or return to sitting for those who will bow their heart)

Pastor: Let us now confess that we may become more faithful disciples to the Gospel of Christ.

**All: *We have not loved you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.***

Pastor: Lord, have mercy.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy.

**All: *We have been deaf to your call to serve.
We have been unfaithful, proud, and hypocritical.***

Pastor: Christ, have mercy.

Congregation: Christ, have mercy.

All: *We have been self-centered and taken advantage of others.*

Pastor: Lord, have mercy.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy.

All: *We have been envious of those more fortunate than ourselves.*

Pastor: Christ, have mercy.

Congregation: Christ, have mercy.

**All: *We have loved worldly goods and comforts too much.
We have been dishonest in daily life and work.***

Pastor: Lord, have mercy.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy.

**All: *We have neglected prayer and worship,
and have failed to commend the faith.***

Pastor: Christ, have mercy.

Congregation: Christ, have mercy.

**All: *We have been blind to human need and suffering,
and indifferent to injustice.***

Pastor: Lord, have mercy.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy.

**All: We have thought uncharitably - unkindly - about others
and we have been prejudiced towards those who differ from us.**

Pastor: Christ, have mercy.

Congregation: Christ, have mercy.

All: *We have wasted and polluted your creation,*

and lacked concern for those who come after us.

Pastor: Lord, have mercy.

Congregation: **Lord, have mercy.**

All: *Merciful God, we have sinned in what we have thought and said, in the wrong we have done and in the good we have not done. We have sinned in ignorance; we have sinned in weakness; we have sinned through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry. We repent and turn to you. Forgive us, for our Savior's sake, and renew our lives to the glory of your name. Amen.*

HYMN

Lord Who Throughout These Forty Days
(Verse 2 to end)

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LITURGY OF THE WORD

Pastor: True fasting and penance mean a sincere change of heart: turning away from evil; turning towards our Loving God. Let us listen for this message in God's Holy Word.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Change Your Hearts

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion; give a shout on my holy mountain! Let all the people of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is near—a day of darkness and no light, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread out upon the mountains, a great and powerful army comes, unlike any that has ever come before them, or will come after them in centuries ahead. Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow; tear your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD your God for he is merciful and compassionate, very patient, full of faithful love, and ready to forgive. Who knows whether he will have a change of heart and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? Blow the horn in Zion; demand a fast; request a special assembly. Gather the people; prepare a holy meeting; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the groom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Between the porch and the altar let the priests, the LORD's ministers, weep. Let them say, "Have mercy, LORD, on your people, and don't make your inheritance a disgrace, an example of failure among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

SUNG RESPONSE

Bless the Lord, My Soul (Sing 2times)

The image shows a musical score for the song "Bless the Lord, My Soul". It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The first system is in 4/4 time and has the lyrics "Bless the Lord my soul and bless God's ho - ly name." The second system is in 3/4 time and has the lyrics "Bless the Lord my soul who leads me in - to life." The piano accompaniment features chords and moving lines in both hands.

EPISTLE READING*NOW is the day***2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10**

We entreat you as ambassadors of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in [Christ] we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see -- we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

SUNG RESPONSE*Bless the Lord, My Soul* (Sing 3 times)

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.

Bless the Lord, my soul who leads me into life.

NEW TESTAMENT READING*Not for a Public Show***Matthew 6:1-16, 16-21**

Jesus said to the disciples: "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. 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. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 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. But 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. 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. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so 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. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

SUNG RESPONSE*Bless the Lord, My Soul* (Sing 3 times)

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.

Bless the Lord, my soul who leads me into life.

OFFERING INVITATION

Pastor: Sisters and brothers, God's ancient, steadfast love is not a love that simply waits for us to stop wandering and return home. God's love comes seeking us, and gives us the gift of Jesus, so that we might have life abundant. Our giving this evening, whether we have been lost and wandering, or secure and safe, expresses our firm conviction that God is with us, no matter what. Let us gather our gifts together and offer them to God in gratitude, heartfelt commitment, praise and prayer.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

All: *Holy, holy, holy God, you call us to give generously as a way of expressing our love to you. On this Ash Wednesday, we strive to strengthen our spiritual commitment. One of those spiritual commitments is our act of giving. Use this offering and this offertory moment to help us reflect on our spiritual commitment. In so doing, may we discover opportunities to grow as your followers during this season of Lent. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.*

IMPOSITION OF ASHES AND SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INTRODUCTION & BLESSING OF ASHES

Pastor: These palm leaves from last Palm Sunday have turned from green branches into gray ashes. This is the way it goes with us. We do not remain the same - we grow older; we make life gray and dusty for ourselves and for others. These ashes remind us of the brittleness of life, of our guilt and the penance we need. Let us pray...

All: *Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and repentance - may we remember that it is only by your gracious gift of grace that we are given everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.*

Pastor: In a short while, we will humbly receive the body and blood of Christ and receive the ashes as we are marked with the sign of the cross. May we come with hearts willing to follow Jesus anew - in the way of self-denial and love.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: This is Jesus, our Passover's table. It is by his love that we are redeemed. Christ is our security, and we are safe within his hands. Here, at this table, we meet our Guardian, who will be our Light through the dark days of Lent, and he will show us the way of forgiveness and love. Let us put our trust in Him.

Congregation: **He is our security, and we will trust in his promises and saving grace.**

Pastor: We remember on the night before he died, God's pure and holy lamb, Jesus, was around a table with his disciples. He took bread, and gave you thanks, O God. He broke it and gave it saying:

Congregation: **"Take and eat; this is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."**

Pastor: As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine and said:

Congregation: **"Take and drink. This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."**

Pastor: Come, Holy Spirit, come. Pour out your Spirit on these your gifts of bread and wine and us. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your faithful disciples, showing your love to the whole world. Amen. As you come forward you will first receive the imposition of ashes with these words and a question:

Pastor: Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return. Will you repent and believe the Gospel?

All: *I will.*

Pastor: These are the gifts of God, for the people of God. All things are now ready!

Pastor: The body of Christ, broken for you. Take. Eat.

Pastor: The blood of Christ, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Take. Drink.

All people: *Most gracious God, we give you thanks for inviting us to share this meal. Strengthen us for the journey ahead, that we may be a blessing to one another, and a blessing to all the world, glorifying you in all things, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Pastor: Let us now end our Ash Wednesday service by singing "Abide with Me." In this order: Verses 3, 4, and 5 and then we will end with verse 1.

HYMN

Abide with Me

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Abide With Me

(Verses 3, 4, 5 and 1)

In moderate time

1. A - bide with me: fast falls the e - ven - tide; The dark - ness
 2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day; Earth's joys grow
 3. I need Thy pres - ence ev - ery pass - ing hour; What but Thy
 4. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless: Ills have no
 5. Hold Thou Thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes; Shine through the

deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide: When oth - er help - ers
 dim, its glo - ries pass a - way; Change and de - cay in
 grace can foil the Tempt - er's power? Who like Thy - self my
 weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness. Where is death's sting? Where,
 gloom, and point me to the skies: Heaven's morn - ing breaks, and

fail, and com-forts flee, Help of the help-less, O a - bide with me.
 all a - round I see; O Thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me.
 guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sun - shine, O a - bide with me.
 grave, thy vic - to - ry? I tri - umph still, if Thou a - bide with me.
 earth's vain shadows flee: In life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me. A-MEN.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.
 Let the memory of your incomplete humanity
 awaken you to the wonders, joys, sorrows, and pain of life.
 Let the ashes you wear be the ashes of transformation -
 of awakening to the beauty and love of seizing the moment
 and living life to the fullest.
 Let it be said of you - that here in this little part of eternity
 that you lived fully, loved extravagantly
 and helped humanity evolve into all that God dreamed we can be!
 You are fearfully and wonderfully made -
 In the image of the ONE who is, who was, and who ever more shall be
 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All: *Amen.*

POSTLUDE

Turn Back, O Man, Forswear Thy Foolish Ways (Hopson)