

ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 22, 2023



Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.

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February 22, 2023

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.

PRELUDE

GATHERING

P The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GREETING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.

C **Amen.**

Please be seated.

GATHERING HYMN

O Lord, throughout These Forty Days

ELW 319

1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days you
2 You strove with Sa - tan, and you won; your
3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet you prayed and
4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, and

prayed and kept the fast; in - spire re - pen - tance
 faith - ful - ness en - dured; lend us your nerve, your
 fixed your mind a - bove; so teach us to de -
 all our earth - ly days, that when the fi - nal

for our sin, and free us from our past.
 skill and trust in God's e - ter - nal word.
 ny our - selves that we may know God's love.
 Eas - ter dawns, we join in heav - en's praise.

INVITATION TO LENT

P Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

CONFESSION OF SIN

A Most holy and merciful God,

C 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.

A 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.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

A 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.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

A Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C Have mercy on us, O God.

A Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

C Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

Please stand as you are able.

P The Holy Gospel, according to Matthew, the sixth chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

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.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,
the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.
The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun - tain round,
then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.

The musical score is written for a two-part setting (Soprano and Bass) in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of six systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The score ends with a double bar line.

Please be seated.

A COMMUNAL BLESSING FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

C God, today our finitude is rubbed on our foreheads.

P The reality of our limits, our fragile bodies, spoken over us like a curse:

C from dust we are made to dust we will return.

P Tell us again exactly how you made us:

C from dust to dust. Blessed are we, a mess of contradictions, in our delusions and deep hopes, in our fragility and finitude. Amen.

SERMON

PR. ANDREW PATTY

HYMN OF THE DAY

Our Father, We Have Wandered

ELW 606

1 Our Fa-ther, we have wan-dered and hid-den from your face;
2 And now at length dis-cern-ing the e-vil that we do,
3 O Lord of all the liv-ing, both ban-ish-ed and re-stored,
in fool-ish-ness have squan-dered your leg-a-cy of grace.
be-hold us, Lord, re-turn-ing with hope and trust to you.
com-pas-sion-ate, for-giv-ing, and ev-er-car-ing Lord,
But now, in ex-ile dwell-ing, we rise with fear and shame.
In haste you come to meet us and home re-joic-ing bring,
grant now that our trans-gress-ing, our faith-less-ness may cease.
as, dis-tant but com-pel-ling, we hear you call our name.
in glad-ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.
Stretch out your hand in bless-ing, in par-don, and in peace.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

P 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.

C Amen.

P Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

A Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept.

A Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

C Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

P Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

DISMISSAL

A Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE