

Wednesday, March 1, 2017
Ash Wednesday

Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.

***GATHERING HYMN**

ELW 319

"O Lord, throughout These Forty Days"

**O Lord, throughout these forty days
you prayed and kept the fast;
inspire repentance for our sin,
and free us from our past.**

**You strove with Satan, and you won;
your faithfulness endured;
lend us your nerve, your skill, and trust
in God's eternal word.**

**Though parched and hungry, yet you prayed
and fixed your mind above;
so teach us to deny ourselves
that we may know God's love.**

**Be with us through this season, Lord,
and all our earthly days,
that when the final Easter dawns,
we join in heaven's praise.**

***GREETING**

☞ *The Lord be with you.*

☞ **And also with you.**

***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!**

First Reading

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming Day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

¹Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
 for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—
²a day of darkness and gloom,
 a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread upon the mountains
 a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
 nor will be again after them
 in ages to come.
¹²Yet even now, says the LORD,
 return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
 ¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the LORD, your God,
 for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
 and relents from punishing.
¹⁴Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
 and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
 for the LORD, your God?
¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
 ¹⁶gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
 assemble the aged;
gather the children,
 even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
 and the bride her canopy.
¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar
 let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
Let them say, “Spare your people, O LORD,
 and do not make your heritage a mockery,
 a byword among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples,
 ‘Where is their God?’”

Psalm 51:1-17

- ¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.
- ²**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,
and cleanse me | from my sin.**
- ³For I know | my offenses,
and my sin is ev- | er before me.
- ⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is
evil | in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and
right | in your judgment.**
- ⁵Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my | mother's womb.
- ⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**
- ⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.
- ⁸**Let me hear | joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**
- ⁹Hide your face | from my sins,
and blot out | all my wickedness.
- ¹⁰**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- | it within me.**
- ¹¹Cast me not away | from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.
- ¹²**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.**
- ¹³Let me teach your ways | to offenders,
and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.
- ¹⁴**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**
- ¹⁵O Lord, o- | pen my lips,
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.
- ¹⁶**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.
You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**
- ¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise.

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

^{20b}We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For 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! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

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**Return to the Lord, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger,
and abounding in steadfast love.**

***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.”

SERMON

“Embodied Worship”

Rev. Roger Lenander

"As We Gather at Your Table"

As we gather at your table,
 as we listen to your word,
 help us know, O God, your presence;
 let our hearts and minds be stirred.
 Nourish us with sacred story
 till we claim it as our own;
 teach us through this holy banquet
 how to make Love's vict'ry known.

Turn our worship into witness
 in the sacrament of life;
 send us forth to love and serve you,
 bringing peace where there is strife.
 Give us, Christ, your great compassion
 to forgive as you forgave;
 may we still behold your image
 in the world you died to save.

Gracious Spirit, help us summon
 other guests to share that feast
 where triumphant Love will welcome
 those who had been last and least.
 There no more will envy blind us
 nor will pride our peace destroy,
 as we join with saints and angels
 to repeat the sounding joy.

INVITATION TO LENT

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☞ *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.*

ANTHEM (12:00 pm service)**"Give Me Jesus"**

Harry T. Burleigh

David Bezona, tenor

CONFESSION OF SIN

pg. 252

- P** *Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.*
- P** *Most holy and merciful God,*
- G** **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.**
- P** *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.*
- G** **Have mercy on us, O God.**
- P** *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.*
- G** **Have mercy on us, O God.**
- P** *Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.*
- G** **Have mercy on us, O God.**
- P** *Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.*
- G** **Have mercy on us, O God.**
- P** *Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.*
- G** **Have mercy on us, O God.**
- P** *Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.*
- G** **Have mercy on us, O God.**
- P** *Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.*
- G** **Have mercy on us, O God.**
- P** *Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.*
- G** **Have mercy on us, O God.**
- P** *Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.*
- G** **Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

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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.*

G Amen!

People may come forward and kneel or stand to receive the ashes.

P *Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
G that we may show forth your glory in the world.*

P *By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,
G bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.*

P *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.*

G Amen!

*PRAYER SONG

ELW 801

"Change My Heart, O God"

**Change my heart, O God.
Make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God.
May I be like you.**

*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Lifting our voices and turning toward God, let us pray for the church, the earth, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church. Turn it toward you, loving God, and unite it in a desire to live for you alone. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Sustain in us a willing spirit to care for the earth and all that lives on it, knowing that we are stewards of your creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the nations. Let no leader put an obstacle in the way of those seeking your justice, peace, and love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Let your light break forth and shine on those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Let your healing spring up quickly. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Guide this assembly constantly back to your word, your holy meal, and the unfailing waters of baptism. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for the lives of the faithful departed who have returned to the dust and thus to you. Inspire us by their examples of holy living. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast love; through Christ our Lord.

Amen!

OFFERING

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P Merciful God,

Q receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection; through Christ our Lord. Amen!

***DIALOGUE**

P The Lord be with you.

Q And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

Q We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Q It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***PREFACE**

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

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Holy, holy, holy Lord,

Lord God of pow'r and might:

Heav'n 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.

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.
You are most holy,
and great is the majesty of your glory.
You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but have eternal life.
We give you thanks for his coming into the world
to fulfill for us your holy will
and to accomplish all things for our salvation.*

*In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,
his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension,
and the promise of his coming again,
we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty,
not as we ought but as we are able;
we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving
and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants,
and these your own gifts of bread and wine,
so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ
may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace,
and, receiving the forgiveness of sin,
may be formed to live as your holy people
and be given our inheritance with all your saints.
To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.*

***LORD'S PRAYER**

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

G **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!**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P *Return to God with all your heart.
Receive bread for the journey, drink for the desert.*

COMMUNION

***BLESSING**

P *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep
you in his grace.*

G **Amen!**

***COMMUNION PRAYER**

P *Compassionate God,*

G **you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten
pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice, our alms, a making
of peace, and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts; through Christ
our Lord. Amen!**

***DISMISSAL**

P *Marked with the cross of Christ,
go forth to love and serve the Lord.*

G **Thanks be to God!**