

Ash Wednesday

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

Ecclesiastes 3:20



February 22, 2023



Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Ash Wednesday

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.

Opening Hymn..... "Softly and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling"



1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
 3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for



you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
 you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
 you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

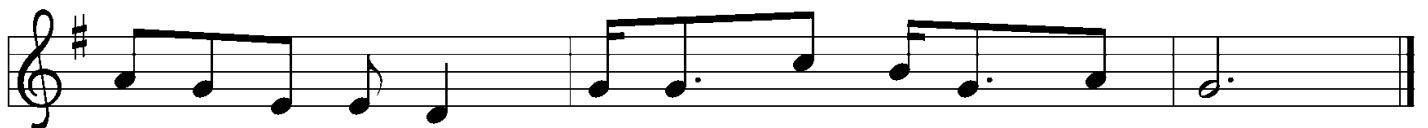
Refrain



watch - ing for you and for me.
 mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!"
 par - don for you and for me.



You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847-1909
 Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson

INVITATION INTO LENT

Brothers and sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of God's creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but turn to him and live. As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love—the discipline of Lent—help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace.

Amen.

Let us acknowledge before God and one another our need for repentance and God's mercy.

Holy God,

we confess to you our faults and failings. Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word; we take for ourselves instead of giving to others; we spoil rather than steward your creation; we cause hurt though you call us to heal; we choose fear over compassion. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, as we seek to follow in your way of life.

Amen.

Hear the good news: God so loved the world that God gave the only Son, so that all may receive life. This promise is for you! God embraces you with divine mercy, ✝ forgives you in Christ's name, and revives you in the Spirit's power.

Amen.



THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

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 Lord,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore, we implore God to grant us true repentance and the Holy Spirit that those things may be pleasing which we do on this day, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to God's eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*Those who wish to receive ashes are invited to come forward.
Ashes are applied to the forehead of each person with the words:
"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

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.

Blow 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—a 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. Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend 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. Who 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? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather 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. Between 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?'"

HERE ENDS THE READING.

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.

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also 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.

HERE ENDS THE READING.

Choral Anthem..... "Mercy Still"

(Choir with Marti Novak, violin; Virginia Conrad, cello; and Scott Sims, piano)

Contributors: Charles Wesley, Nicole Elsey, Heather Sorenson

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

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

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

"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."

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

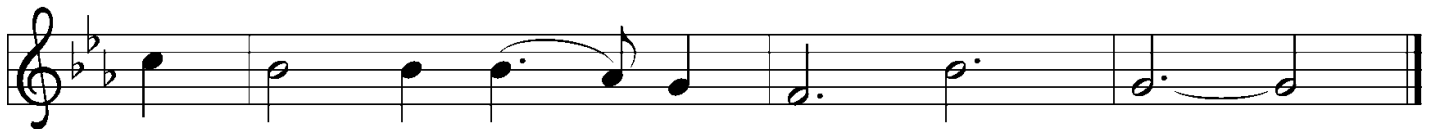
Sermon Hymn..... "Just As I Am, Without One Plea"



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was
2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y_a con - flict,
3 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt wel - come, par - don,
4 Just as I am; thy love un - known has bro - ken ev - 'ry



shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
man - y_a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,
cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise I be - lieve,
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,



O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789–1871

Music: WOODWORTH, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

O Lord, our God, you gather your church and call us to return to you. Accompany us throughout our Lenten pilgrimage. Create in us clean hearts and renew all the baptized to declare your praise. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Renew your creation, O God. Bring rains to parched places and heal lands affected by a changing, that all inhabitants of the earth experience your abundance. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Renew the nations, O God. Give voice to those on the margins and resolve to world leaders who seek to protect those most vulnerable (*especially the People of Syria, Turkey and Ukraine*). Loosen the bonds of injustice and bring an end to all violence, oppression, and persecution. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Renew your people, O God. Respond to those who cry out to you in secret or in seclusion. Equip us with compassion to care for those who experience homelessness, food insecurity, economic hardship, and illness (*especially Mary Ann, Don, Barbara, Christi, Larry, Sue, Michael, Jenna, Joe, Dave, Joy, Vicki, Jay, Tyler, Norm, Penny, Michael, Jay, Hadlee, Michael, Trisha, Henry, Del, Ruth, Sarah, Gloria, Lisa, Sumi, Celine, Jim, Jonathan, Michael, Darcie, Peter, Gavin and Leon*). Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Renew this congregation, O God. Inspire our faith formation ministries and those who teach and lead. Invigorate us with lifelong curiosity and wonder as we grow as your disciples. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

O Lord, our God, we give thanks for all your faithful ones of every time and place. Renew us by the example of their lives of prayer and service, and at the last, bring us with them into your everlasting presence. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you all.
And also with you.

Offering

Offering Prayer

God of good gifts, receive these and all our offerings as we present them in faithful service for the sake of your gospel. Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.
Amen.

Thanksgiving at the Table

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.

The Lord's Prayer

**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 the Table

Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

Distribution

At this time take the elements you have with you saying these words:

The Body of Christ given for you. The Blood of Christ shed for you.

Communion Hymn..... "Come to the Table"

VERSE



Come to the ta - ble of mer - cy, — pre -



-pared with the wine — and the bread; —



All who are hun - gry and thirst - y, —

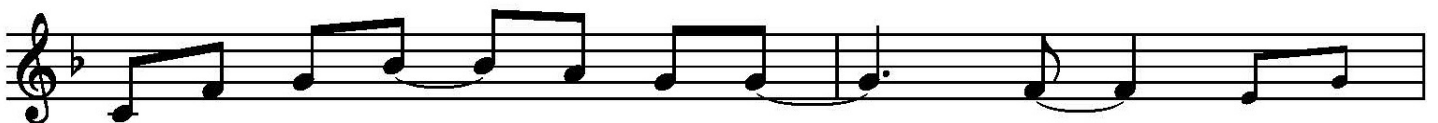
CHORUS



come and your souls — will be fed. — Come at the Lord's — in - vi - ta -



- tion, — re - ceive from His nail - scarred hand; —



Eat of the bread — of sal - va - tion, —



drink of the blood — of the Lamb. —

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Post Communion Prayer

Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love.

Amen.

Blessing

God, the giver of love, ✝ Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey.

Amen.

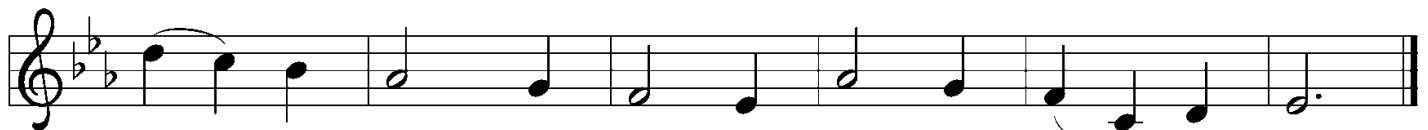
Sending Hymn..... "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee"



1 O Mas - ter, let me walk with you in low - ly
2 Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear,
3 Teach me your pa - tience; share with me a clos - er,
4 In hope that sends a shin - ing ray far down the



paths of ser - vice true; tell me your se - cret;
win - ning word of love; teach me the way - ward
dear - er com - pa - ny, in work that keeps faith
fu - ture's broad - 'ning way, in peace that on - ly



help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.
feet to stay, and guide them in the home - ward way.
sweet and strong, in trust that tri - umphs o - ver wrong,
you can give; with you, O Mas - ter, let me live.

Text: Washington Gladden, 1836–1918, alt.
Music: MARYTON, H. Percy Smith, 1825–1898

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.