

# Ash Wednesday

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

Ecclesiastes 3:20



**March 5, 2025**



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## Ash Wednesday

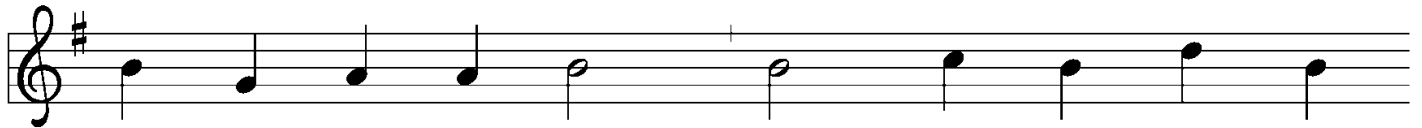
### **Introduction**

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.

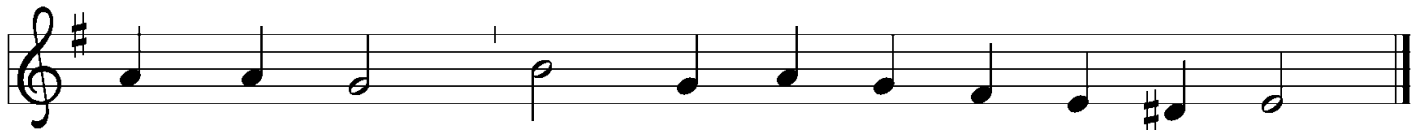
## Gathering Hymn..... "The Glory of These Forty Days"



1 The glo - ry of these for - ty days we cel - e -  
2 A - lone and fast - ing Mo - ses saw the lov - ing  
3 So Dan - iel trained his mys - tic sight, de - liv - ered  
4 Then grant, O God, that we may, too, re - turn in



brate with songs of praise; for Christ, through whom all  
God who gave the law; and to E - li - jah,  
from the li - ons' might; and John, the Bride - groom's  
fast and prayer to you. Our spir - its strength - en



things were made, him - self has fast - ed and has prayed.  
fast - ing, came the steeds and char - i - ots of flame.  
friend, be - came the her - ald of Mes - si - ah's name.  
with your grace, and give us joy to see your face.

Text: Latin hymn, 11th cent.; tr. Maurice F. Bell, 1862–1947, alt.

Music: ERHALT UNS, HERR, J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543

Outside USA: Text from *The English Hymnal*, © Oxford University Press 1906, All rights reserved.

## 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 forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Compassionate One,

**you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross.**

**Amen.**

Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In † Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever.

**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.**

## **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..... "Restore in Us, Oh God"**



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -  
 2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from  
 3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -  
 4 Three-per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.  
 fruit - less fear un - furl our lives like spring - time bud and flow'r.  
 tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.  
 we, when all our search - ing ends, may see you face to face.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944  
 Music: BAYLOR, Hal H. Hopson, b. 1933  
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## 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

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of our journeys, we pray for the church as the season of Lent begins. Guide your people in spiritual practices and preparation for baptism. Strengthen communities of faith in discipleship and witness for the sake of the gospel. Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

God of creation, we pray for the earth. As you once brought forth life from the dust, breathe healing and renewal into all places where ecosystems are stretched and strained. Nurture organic cycles of life, death, and rebirth. Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

God of the nations, we pray for an end to wars and occupations that reduce communities to ash. Turn leaders away from fearful decision-making, and lead all people into the justice and compassion of your reign.



Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

God of the suffering, we pray for all who live with any pain (*especially Jeff, Eric, Dan, Charlie, Terry, Barbara, Lizzy, Christi, Michael, Angelika, Sheila, Jenna, Dave, Joy, Frank, Vicki, Kyle, Tyler, Dick, Dan, Kristin, Tom, Jill, Michael, Gabriele, Don, Betty, Prentice, Rebecca, Bonnie, Kathie, Del, Mark, Kristen, Bob, Michael, and Peter*). Comfort people living with chronic or terminal illnesses, addictions, or anxiety. Grant that all who dwell in the dust of grief may know your presence there. Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

God of community, we pray for those who accompany the dying: for first responders, health care and hospice workers, chaplains, and those who facilitate burials of the dead. Sustain them as they serve their neighbors in life and death with dignity and care. Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

God of the cross, we give thanks for those who have completed their lives on earth and have returned to you. Strengthen us with the promise that within the ashes of death are the seeds of resurrection life. Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.  
**Amen.**

## **Sharing of the Peace**

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

## **Offering**

### **Offering Prayer**

Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ.  
**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.**

## **Distribution**

*We will be using the intinction method for distribution. You will be handed bread and asked to dip the bread in the chalice. Gluten-free bread and grape juice are available. Please make your way forward by the center aisle, returning down the side. If mobility is a problem for you, please notify an usher and you will be served at your seat.*

## **Invitation to the Table**

All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

## **Post Communion Prayer**

Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Blessing

God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit,  
✚ bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

## Sending Hymn..... "Be Thou My Vision"



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,  
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:  
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,  
thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,  
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.  
great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860–1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880–1931  
Music: SLANE, Irish traditional

## Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**