

St Stephen's Episcopal Church
Seattle, WA

An Order for Ash Wednesday
February 17, 2021

The Collect

Presider God be with you.
People And also with you.
Presider Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our unfaithfulness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Joel 2:1-2,12-17

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?'"

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 103:8-14

You are full of com / passion and mercy,
slow to anger and / of great kindness.

You will not / always accuse us,
nor will you keep your / anger for ever.

You have not dealt with us ac - / cording to our sins,
nor rewarded us according / to our wickedness.

For as the heavens are / high above the earth,
so is your mercy great upon / those who fear you.

As far as the / east is from the west,
so far have you removed our / sins from us.

As a parent has com- / passion for a child,
so do you have compassion for / those who fear you.

For you yourself / know whereof we are made;
you remembers that we / are but dust.

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

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.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People Thanks be to God.

Presider The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

The Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

Jesus said, "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."

Presider The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Sermon

Imposition of Ashes

Dear People of God:

The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now come before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is kept for a time

Presider Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

People **Amen.**

Instructions for the Imposition of Ashes are on the last page of the bulletin, or view the video on our website. The ashes are imposed with the following words:

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

Psalm 51

You love those centered in truth;
in wisdom center me.
Wash me with fresh water;
wash me bright as snow.

Fill me with happy songs;
let my bruised bones dance.
Shut your eye to my sin;
make my guilt vanish.

Bring me back my joy; save me.
Support me, free my Spirit.
Then I will teach your way
sinners will turn to you.

Help me stop my tears,
and I will sing your goodness.
Lord, give me your words,
I will shout your praise.

When I offer holocaust
you do not take the gift.
So offer my shattered spirit
a changed heart you welcome.

Litany of Penitence

Let us now call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God.

**Most holy and merciful Father:
We confess to you and to one another,
and to the whole communion of saints
in heaven and on earth,
that we have sinned by our own fault
in thought, word, and deed;
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

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.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We have been deaf 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.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness:
the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,
We confess to you, Lord.

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

Our anger at our own frustration,
and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts,
and our dishonesty in daily life and work,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship,
and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,
We confess to you, Lord.

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done:
for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and
cruelty,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our
prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation,
and our lack of concern for those who come after us,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

Restore us, good Lord, and break our hearts open so we can receive your grace;
Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us 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.

Presider Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their brokenness and live, has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe his holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be lived in the true fullness of your Abundant life which is your eternal joy now and forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace

Presider The peace of Christ be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

Greet each other with the peace of Christ.

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. **Amen.**

Presider
People This is love, not that we loved God,
but that he loved us and sent his Son.
He is the sacrifice for our sins,
that we might live through him.
If God loves us so much
we ought to love one another.
If we love one another
God lives in us.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.



There is a time in the liturgy for the imposition of ashes. Usually this is done by the clergy or other leaders in the liturgy. But in this year's virtual service, you get to impose ashes on yourself, or perhaps designate one person to impose ashes on all the family members gathered.

You may use the ashes we sent out in Lent in a Bag this year, or you can make your own ashes. See the video on our Lent page.

Use a dot of olive oil on your finger and pick up a pinch of ash. Now rub your finger down the pad of your thumb as if you are spreading the ashes out slightly. Now you are ready.

Trace a cross on your forehead with the ashes or on another's forehead and say: Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.

To help clean the ashes off your fingers, rub your fingers on a slice of lemon, and then clean off the lemon juice by rubbing them on a piece of bread. Afterward you can then wash with soap and water.

We hope you can join us not only on Ash Wednesday but also on your continuing journey through Lent. Blessings to you for a Holy Lent.