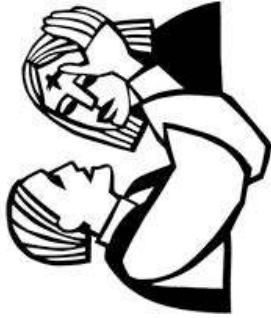


Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024



About this day:

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. Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

Gathering Hymn

Create in Me a Clean Heart (*Psalms 51*) ELW 188
(*Stand as you are able*)

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who draws all people together through Jesus.
Amen.

Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Holy God,

we confess that we are caught in snares of sin and cannot break free.

We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold.

We speak in ways that silence others. We are silent when we should speak up.

We keep score in our hearts. We let hurts grow into hatred.

For all these things and for sins only you know, forgive us, Lord. Amen.

Imposition of Ashes *You are invited to come forward for the imposition of ashes.*

Absolution

Here is a flood of grace: Out of love for the whole world, God draws near to us, breaks every snare of sin, washes away our wrongs, and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of

your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who is Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

First Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

¹Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on every side.
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is near—²a day of darkness and gloom, a day of darkness as if night,
Like blackness spread upon the mountains and their peaks,
their like has never been from of old, nor will be again.
¹²Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
tear your hearts and not your clothes.

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.
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.
¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call for the people.

Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged and the young together.
Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride and her friends leave their homes.
¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar let the people weep.

Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make us an object of mockery, a byword among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Why has the Lord done this to us?'"
Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

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

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴"Beware of practicing your piety before people in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven."

²⁴"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

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

Hymn

Be Thou My Vision

ELW 793

Prayers of Intercession

Please respond to each petition: Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Invitation to Communion

Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

Prayer after Communion

Generous God,
at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.
As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,
now make us one loaf to feed the world;
in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.
Amen.

Sending Hymn

Softly and Tenderly

ELW 608

Blessing

Beloved, we are God's own people,
holy, washed, renewed. God bless you and keep
shower you with mercy, fill you with courage,
and + give you peace.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share your bread.

Thanks be to God.

Many thanks to Pastor Mary Albing, Marshall Hall
& Daryl Sulander.

*Portions of the liturgy are from Sunday
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