

ASH WEDNESDAY

LENTEN THEME: Honest Repentance
February 22, 2023

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

As the ashes are imposed on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, God says, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

INVOCATION

P: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

READING *Joel 2:12–19* ("Return to the LORD, your God.")

L: Here the Word of the Lord:

"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments."

Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. 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; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber.

Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people.

The LORD answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

SONG OF CONFESSION "Ashes" by Tom Conry (video)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON Ezekiel 36:25-27

L: Hear the promise of God: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances."

Friends in Christ, the promises of God are true: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. He himself carried our sins in his body on the cross that we might be dead to sin and alive to God. Assured of God's promises, let us live as new people, free to love God and our neighbor.

C: **We do so intend, with the help of God! And we will begin right here, in the house of the Lord.**

HYMN No. 420 "Christ the Life of All the Living" (vs 1, 6 & 7)

**Christ, the life of all the living, Christ, the death of death, our foe,
Who, Thyself for me once giving To the darkest depths of woe:
Through Thy suff'rings, death, and merit I eternal life inherit.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

**Thou hast suffered great affliction And hast borne it patiently,
Even death by crucifixion, Fully to atone for me;
Thou didst choose to be tormented That my doom should be prevented.**

Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

**Then, for all that wrought my pardon, For Thy sorrows deep and sore,
For Thine anguish in the Garden, I will thank Thee evermore,
Thank Thee for Thy groaning, sighing, For Thy bleeding and Thy dying,
For that last triumphant cry, And shall praise Thee, Lord, on high.**

PRAYER (based on verses from Psalm 8)

L: Let us pray:

“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth. You have set Your glory above the heavens. What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for Him? You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.”

C: Father in heaven, we have confessed and acknowledged our waywardness before You and yet You have given us cause for rejoicing by giving us full pardon and forgiveness in return. As You have remembered us in mercy, help us to remember Your lavish grace, that we might live out our days on earth in Your peace and in Christ-like love with one another; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit, reign eternally, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING Genesis 1:1-10 (God Created)

L: The READING for this Ash Wednesday service is from the Book of Genesis, chapter 1.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *John 2:14-22*

L: The Holy Gospel according to St. John the second chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.” His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

L: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN No. 804 "O Worship the King" (vss. 1,2,5,6)

**O worship the King, all glorious above.
O gratefully sing His pow'r and His love;
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.**

**O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;
His chariots of wrath the deep thunder clouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.**

**Frail children of dust and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail.
Thy mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,
Our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend!**

**O measureless Might, ineffable Love,
While angels delight to hymn Thee above,
Thy humbler creation, though feeble their lays,
With true adoration shall sing to Thy praise.**

SERMON "Law" Pastor Vern

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

L: For our sakes, O loving God, Your Son shared our humanity, flesh of our flesh, dust of our dust.

C: For our sakes, O loving God, our sinless Savior took our sin upon himself, its guilt and punishment.

L: For our sakes, he resisted all that might have tempted him to turn aside from your holy will, to violate your Word.

C: For our sakes, he took up the cross, and gave his life upon it.

L: For Jesus' sake, O God, stretch out your loving hand to fill our hands with his fullness.

C: Loosen our grasp on the things of this world and free our wills from covetousness.

L: Give us the strength and determination to resist temptation, to turn anew to you and the mercy you offer, to take up the cross and follow faithfully, relying on your firmly guiding hand.

C: For we are dust, and unto dust we shall return. And yet we do so with firm confidence in your creating, saving power. For in your hands, dust lives!

L: Breathe into us the breath of life, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

P: We join with all the saints in heaven and on earth as we pray together the prayer Jesus taught us saying:

**All: 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.**

BLESSING OF THE LORD

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: Amen. Thanks be to God!

CLOSING HYMN No. 878 “Abide with Me” (vss. 1 & 6)

**Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.**

**Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.**

SENDING

L: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.