

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Wednesday, February 26th, 2020

7:00 pm

Ash Wednesday begins the 40-day season of Lent. In the ancient world and throughout the history of the Church, God's people have used ashes as a symbol of deep contrition and true repentance. To reduce something to ashes is to utterly destroy it. For the penitent, ashes are symbolic of the sins of the past. In Jesus Christ, all of our sins are past, because he has overcome and utterly destroyed all sin for us. Ashes remind us that, because of Jesus Christ, our sins no longer exist in God's sight - Jesus has reduced them to ashes.

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THE ASSISTING ELDERS Peter Witt & Allan Nagora
ORGANIST Kim Blais

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THE HYMNS

First Hymn	Saviour When In Dust to Thee	#419
Hymn of the Day	From Depths of Woe	#607
Closing Hymn	Today Your Mercy Calls Us	#915

THE PSALMODY Psalm 51:1-13 (14-19)

READINGS Joel 2:12-19; 2 Cor. 5:20b-6:10; Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21

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Ash Wednesday Address

Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

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

C **Amen.**

P Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope. Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

Silence for reflection.

Litany for Ash Wednesday

P O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
P O Christ,
C **have mercy.**
P O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
P O Christ,
C **hear us.**
P God the Father in heaven,
C **have mercy.**
P God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
C **have mercy.**
P God the Holy Spirit,
C **have mercy.**
P Be gracious to us.
C **Spare us, good Lord.**
P Be gracious to us.
C **Help us, good Lord.**
P By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity; by Your baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and passion; by Your precious death and burial; by Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:
C **Help us, good Lord.**
P In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the day of judgment:
C **Help us, good Lord.**
P We poor sinners implore You
C **to hear us, O Lord.**
P To prosper the teaching of Your Word; to bless our prayer and meditation; to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith; and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:
C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
P To draw all to Yourself; to bless those who are instructed in the faith; to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the lonely, the forsaken, the abandoned, and all who stand in need of our prayer; to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy; and to have mercy on us all:
C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
P To turn our hearts to You; to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers; and graciously to hear our prayers:
C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
 C **we implore You to hear us.**
 P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
 C **have mercy.**
 P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
 C **have mercy.**
 P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
 C **grant us Your peace.**
 P O Christ,
 C **hear us.**
 P O Lord,
 C **have mercy.**
 P O Christ,
 C **have mercy.**
 P O Lord,
 C **have mercy. Amen.**

The Imposition of Ashes

Sit

Ashes symbolize our sinful state before God. Because we do sin, they remind us of the fact that we will die because of our sins. Yet they also suggest cleansing and renewal. They point to the gift which God gives of forgiveness in Christ. Those who desire to receive ashes may come forward. The ashes mixed with olive oil leave a cross shaped mark on our foreheads, a reminder that sin has marked each of us for death. It is in the shape of the cross, however, because it is the work of Jesus who forgives us our sins and gives us life. Coming forward is a matter of personal piety. Please feel no obligation to either remain in your seat in prayer, or to come forward to receive the imposition of Ashes. Remember, although outward signs can be very good and helpful outward preparation, whatever you do, whether you come forward or not, do that which reminds you best of the sinful state in which we come before God.

The pastor and assistants receive ashes first, followed by the congregation. Using the right thumb, the pastor or an assistant places the ashes on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross.

Address for Imposition of Ashes -Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

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Joel 2:12-19 "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.

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

We implore 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. Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, "In a favourable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favourable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honour and dishonour, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

"Beware of practising your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [6] But when 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 when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.