

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021 – 6 PM
Imposition of Ashes



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Rev. Rodney Roehner

The Celebrant enters in silence and then begins

Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that 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 wretchedness, 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.**

The Lessons *Please be seated*

Old Testament

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?'"

The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 103:8-14 (read responsively by whole verse)

- 8 The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, *
 slow to anger and of great kindness.
- 9 **He will not always accuse us, ***
 nor will he keep his anger for ever.
- 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, *
 nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.
- 11 **For as the heavens are high above the earth, ***
 so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west, *
 so far has he removed our sins from us.
- 13 **As a father cares for his children, ***
 so does the Lord care for those who fear him.
- 14 For he himself knows whereof we are made; *
 he remembers that we are but dust.

Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

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

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

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

The Celebrant then invites the people to the observance of a holy Lent, saying

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 kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is then kept for a time, all kneeling. The Celebrant then says the following prayer over the ashes

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. **Amen.**

At this time, you may place the ashes on your forehead while saying the following words.

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

Litany of Penitence

The Celebrant and People together, all kneeling

Most holy and merciful Father:

**We confess to thee and to one another,
and to the whole communion or 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.**

The Celebrant continues

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 not heard your call to serve, as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved thy Holy Spirit.
Have mercy on us, Lord.

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

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

Our anger, hatred, malice, and envy, **We confess to you, O Lord.**

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

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

Accept our repentance, O 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, O 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, O Lord.

For our poor stewardship and misuse of your creation, and our lack of concern for the generations to come, **Accept our repentance, O Lord.**

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;
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.

The Celebrant stands and, facing the people, says

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness 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 do 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 pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Grant, most merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**