

ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH



ASH WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 14, 2024 - 12:00 Noon

Welcome! If you are visiting, we offer you a special welcome. If you are with us on Zoom and would like more information about our parish, please send the Zoom Usber a chat message, or email office@stjamesvt.org with your name, where you're from, and your email address. On Zoom, please keep microphones muted for most of the service. If you are reading a lesson or adding a prayer request aloud during the time of prayers, please unmute yourself, then mute yourself again. In person, sitting distances may be observed as possible and masks may be worn. Please be mindful of the comfort of others.

On this day, the Presider begins the liturgy with the Salutation and the Collect of the Day. The People stand as they are able.

Presider The Lord be with you.

BCP 264

People And also with you.

Presider Let us pray.

Presider and People

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 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.

A period of silence is kept.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading Isaiah 58:1-12

Lector A reading from The Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you

offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Lector Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.
People *Thanks be to God*

A period of silence is kept.

Psalm 103:8-14

Benedic, anima mea

Read in a manner chosen by the Presider: direct recitation (unison), responsive recitation (leader and people) alternating either by verse or at the asterisk, or antiphonally (side to side beginning with the Officiant's side) alternating either by verse or at the asterisk.

8 You are full of compassion and mercy, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.

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

10 You have 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 your mercy great upon those who fear you.

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

13 As a parent cares for a child, *
so do you care for those who fear you.

14 For you yourself know whereof we are made; *
you remember that we are but dust.

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Lector A reading from The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

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.

Lector Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.

People *Thanks be to God*

The people stand as able.

Sequence Hymn **Bless the Lord my soul**

WLP 825

Bless the Lord my soul and bless God's holy name.

Bless the Lord my soul, who leads me into life.

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

Deacon 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."

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.

People *Praise to you, Lord Christ*

A period of silence is kept.

Time of Reflection

All stand as able, and the Presider 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 as able. The Presider 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.*

Those desiring the Imposition of Ashes come forward to the Chancel steps. The ashes are imposed with the following words:

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

The following Psalm is then said in unison, all remaining seated.

Psalm 51: 1-18

Miserere mei, Deus

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving kindness; *

in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness *

and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, *
and my sin is ever before me.

- 4 Against you only have I sinned *
and done what is evil in your sight.
- 5 And so you are justified when you speak *
and upright in your judgment.
- 6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *
a sinner from my mother's womb.
- 7 For behold, you look for truth deep within
me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
- 8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
- 9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, *
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- 10 Hide your face from my sins *
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 12 Cast me not away from your presence *
and take not your holy Spirit from me.
- 13 Give me the joy of your saving help again *
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
- 14 I shall teach your ways to the wicked, *
and sinners shall return to you.
- 15 Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,
O God of my salvation.
- 16 Open my lips, O Lord, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- 17 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, *
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Litany of Penitence

The Presider and People together, all kneeling as able

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.

The Presider 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 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 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 Priest 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. God pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe the holy Gospel. Therefore we beseech God to grant us true repentance and the Holy Spirit, that those things may please God 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 eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

All stand and the Peace is then exchanged.

The Peace

Presider The peace of Christ be always with you.

People *And also with you.*

If you are in person, please feel free to share the peace with those near to you. Please be mindful that some may want a “touchless” peace. In this case, the peace may be shared in various ways such as the prayer to heart position. Please be mindful of others’ need to keep distance during this time. On Zoom, please either open your microphone to share the peace aloud or visually give a sign of peace or share your peace in the chat box.

The Holy Communion

The Presider says

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High. *-Psalm 50:14*

1. Gra - cious Spir - it, give your ser - vants joy to set sin's
 2. Word made flesh, who gave up glo - ry to be - come our
 3. Lov - ing God, who birthed cre - a - tion from the noth - ing -
 4. Tri - une God, e - ter - nal Be - ing, nev - er end - ing,

cap - tives free, hope to heal the bro - ken - heart - ed,
 great high priest, tak - ing on our hu - man na - ture
 ness of space, kin - dling life where all was emp - ty,
 un - be - gun, bound - less grace and per - fect jus - tice,

peace to share love's li - ber - ty. Through us bring your balm of
 to re - deem the last and least: let your cour - age and com -
 turn - ing cha - os in - to grace: when we feel con - fused and
 right - eous and for - giv - ing One: so en - fold us in you

glad - ness to the wound - ed and op - pressed; help us claim and
 pas - sion shape and guide our min - is - tries; as our Sav - ior
 fruit - less, dawn up - on our rest - less night; give us faith's im -
 mer - cy that our wills and yours u - nite; through us may the

show God's fa - vor as a peo - ple called and blessed.
 and our Shep - herd, lead us to the truth that frees.
 ag - i - na - tion, hope's re - new - ing, love's de - light.
 world be - hold you, find your love, your truth, your light.

Words: Carl P. Daw, Jr. (B. 1944). Music: Abbot's Leigh, Cyril Vincent Taylor (1907-1991).

The Great Thanksgiving – Prayer B

BCP 367

- Presider** The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Presider Lift up your hearts.
People We lift them to the Lord.
Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Presider

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. You bid your faithful people cleanse their hearts, and prepare with joy for the Paschal feast; that fervent in prayer and in works of mercy, and renewed by your Word and sacraments, they may come to the fullness of grace which you have prepared for those who love you. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.

Then the Presider continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Presider and People

We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The Presider continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with [_____ and] all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Lord's Prayer

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

People and Presider

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.

The Breaking of the Bread

Presider This is the true bread which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

People *Whoever eats this bread will live for ever.*

A period of silence is kept.

The Presider invites the people to Communion

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ lived, died, and rose for you and feed on Christ in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

and adds

All are welcome at God's table.

A moment of silence is observed.

Ushers will guide the congregation to communion. We have returned to communion in both kinds, bread and wine, using a Pouring Chalice and individual cups. Please come forward to receive communion at the step. Pick up an empty communion cup in the tray on your right as you approach the steps and leave your empty cup in the tray closest to the organ as you return to your seat. If you wish to continue receiving in one kind (bread only) you are welcome to do so; if you do not want to receive wine, please cross your arms over your chest when the wine is offered. If you wish only a blessing and no communion, please also indicate this with your arms crossed over your chest as the priest passes by. If you are unable physically to come forward, please let an usher know and communion will be brought to you. Also, please let the priest know if you need a gluten-free wafer.

Communion Hymn:

Before thy throne, O God

Hymnal 574

1 Be - fore thy throne, O God, we kneel: give us a con - science
2 Search out our hearts and make us true; help us to give to
3 For sins of heed - less word and deed, for pride am - bi - tious
4 Let the fierce fires which burn and try, our in - most spi - rits

quick to feel, a rea - dy mind to un - der - stand the
 all their due. From love of plea - sure, lust of gold, from
 to suc - ceed, for craft - y trade and sub - tle snare to
 pu - ri - fy: con - sume the ill; purge out the shame; O

mean - ing of thy chas - tening hand; what - e'er the pain and
 sins which make the heart grow cold, wean us and train us
 catch the sim - ple un - a - ware, for lives be - reft of
 God, be with us in the flame; a new - born peo - ple

shame may be, bring us, O Fa - ther, near - er thee.
 with thy rod; teach us to know our faults, O God.
 pur - pose high, for - give, for - give, O Lord, we cry.
 may we rise, more pure, more true, more no - bly wise.

Words: William Boyd Carpenter (1841-1918), alt. Music: *St. Petersburg*, Dimitri S. Bortniansky (1751-1825).

The people stand as they are able.

Postcommunion Prayer

Presider and People

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Solemn Prayer

The Deacon says

Bow down before the Lord.

The people bow or kneel as able and the Presider says

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Dismissal

Deacon Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People *Thanks be to God.*

Sending Hymn: Lead us, heavenly Father

Hymnal 559

1 Lead us, heaven - ly Fa - ther, lead us o'er the world's tem -
2 Sa - vior, breathe for - give - ness o'er us; all our weak - ness
3 Spi - rit of our God, de - scend - ing, fill our hearts with

pes - tuous sea; guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
thou dost know; thou didst tread this earth be - fore us;
heaven - ly joy; love with ev - ery pas - sion blend - ing,

for we have no help but thee, yet pos - ses - sing
thou didst feel its keen - est woe; yet un - fear - ing,
plea - sure that can nev - er cloy; thus pro - vid - ed,

ev - ery bless - ing, if our God our Fa - ther be.
 per - se - ver - ing, to thy pas - sion thou didst go.
 par - doned, guid - ed, noth - ing can our peace des - troy.

Words: James Edmeston (1791-1867), alt. Music: *Dulce carmen*, melody from *An Essay on the Church Plain Chant*, 1782; adapt. *Collection of Motetts or Antiphons*, ca 1840; harm. William Henry Monk (1823-1889).

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Ash Wednesday

Welcome to St. James Episcopal Church on this first day of Lent. Today the Liturgy presents a challenge to Christian people. It confronts us with the radical change in living which is the Way of Christ. We are faced with sin and salvation as alternative directions for our lives: sin as separation from God, from others, from ourselves and from the natural world; salvation as reconciliation with God, others, ourselves, and the natural world.

The Church's liturgy on Ash Wednesday invites us 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." This first day of Lent sets the pattern for our Lenten observance: one which leads directly to our recognition that we are mortal; we will die and, indeed, are in the process of dying all the time. Our sin is not the primary focus of our attention. Instead, our recognition that we are sinful moves us to an awareness of our need to change and be changed. Our repentance becomes not an end in itself but a renewed relationship of children to God, opening us to accept God's love, mercy, and peace.

As a result, prayer, fasting, and self-denial are saved from being mere good works for our own benefit, and instead free us, our time, and our resources to a new and deeper scope of ministry to others.

Finally, in the scriptures we recover once again the story of God's mighty acts of salvation for the entire human race: we discover once again that we are part of a vast company of believers in every age on pilgrimage into God's Kingdom.

When we receive the ashes on the first day of Lent, we do so within the body of Christ. Here, in the company of our fellow sinners, we are not in danger of taking pride in our penitence because we are all alike in our sinfulness. We should consider carefully, however, the words Christ addresses to us in the Gospel reading on this day; asking ourselves, "Can I wear these ashes into the world without feeling a kind of self-righteousness about them?" "Should I heed the Lord's word and wash my face before going out from the Body into the world?"

The Liturgy on Ash Wednesday is reduced to its primary elements of Word and Sacrament. We are called to consider our mortality and in that context our sin and our absolute dependence upon God for salvation and for life.

We may be tempted to limit our concerns to our sins and our mortality, letting the ashes be the most important thing in our worship today. But we use the ashes simply as the starting point for that which is far deeper and ultimately more important: salvation. The ashes, the penitence, the fasting: all of these are but means toward the goal of Ash Wednesday, of Lent, indeed, of all Christian living; namely, repentance, new life, and ministry to others.

Isaiah 58:1-12 “Be reconciled to God...” Paul tells us. Make your prayer, fasting, and ministry the marks of an inner and fundamental way of living day in and day out, says the Lord. In his teaching about fasting, Jesus echoes the message Isaiah had given to Israel centuries earlier.

“Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return,” is turned around into, “you shall have life, and you shall have it abundantly.”

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ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Bishop of Vermont: The Right Rev. Shannon MacVean-Brown

Rector: The Rev. Kim Hardy

Deacon: The Rev. Deacon David Ganter

Vestry:

Senior Warden, Brian Garland

Junior Warden, Ron Belair

Linda Chiasson

Susan Ficklin

Frances Huessy

Jenny Ogelby

Sandy Redmond

Minister of Music: Carol Reichard

Parish Administrator: Vacant

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