

# Ash Wednesday

St. George's Episcopal Church

February 17th, 2021

*Presider*

God be with you

*People*

**And also with you**

*Presider*

Let us pray

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.

*All*

**Amen.**

## The First Reading

Isaiah 58:1-12

*Reader*

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.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*All*

## The Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

*Reader*

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made himself 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.

The Word of the Lord.

*All*

**Thanks be to God.**

## The Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

*Deacon*

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

*All*

**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

*Deacon*

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 our Lord.

*All*

**Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Homily

# Invitation to a Holy Lent

*Presider*

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.

## The Blessing of Ashes

*Presider*

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.

*A word about the imposition of ashes: As we begin our journey through Lent together in the midst of pandemic, we are surrounded by signs that we are fragile, mortal and stand in need before God. Even the masks we wear speak this truth. The mark of ashes we traditionally receive on this day is an important but optional sign. Ashes will be available for you today through St. Georges, but please make the choice about receiving them that feels appropriate for you.*

*If you wish to receive ashes, we invite you to come to the red front doors of St. George's following online service at 1:00pm.*

*For those who wish to receive ashes but are unable to come at 1:00pm, Fr. Ryan will be available at the church until 5:00pm.*

## Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness;  
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.  
Wash me through and through from my wickedness  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.  
Against you only have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight.  
And so you are justified when you speak  
and upright in your judgment  
Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,  
a sinner from my mother's womb.  
For behold, you look for truth deep within me,  
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.  
Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;  
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.  
Make me hear of joy and gladness,  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.  
Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquities.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence  
and take not your holy Spirit from me.  
Give me the joy of your saving help again  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.  
I shall teach your ways to the wicked,  
and sinners shall return to you.  
Deliver me from death, O God,  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,  
O God of my salvation.  
Open my lips, O Lord,  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.  
Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice;  
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.  
The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

# The Litany of Penitence

*All* **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.**

*Presider* 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.

*All* **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

*Deacon* 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.

*All* **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

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

*All* **We confess to you, Lord.**

*Presider* Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

*All* **We confess to you, Lord.**

*Deacon* Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

*All* **We confess to you, Lord.**

*Deacon* Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

*All* **We confess to you, Lord.**

*Presider* Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

*All* **We confess to you, Lord.**

*Deacon* 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,

*All* **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

*Deacon* For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

*All* **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

*Presider* For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

*All* **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

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

*All* **Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.**

*Deacon* Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

*All* **That we may show forth your glory in the world.**

*Presider* By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,  
*All* **Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

*Presider* 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 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.  
*All* **Amen.**

## The Peace

*Presider* The Peace of Christ be always with you.  
*People* **And also with you.**

## The Lord's Prayer

*Presider* As our Savior Christ has taught us we now pray,  
*All* **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 forever. Amen.**

## Prayer Over the People

*Presider* 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.

## Dismissal

*A Deacon dismisses the people, and the people respond*

*All* **Thanks be to God.**