

Ash Wednesday Service 2024 - All Saints & Zion



On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

Prelude

Announcements

Oh Lord Throughout these 40 days - ELW 319

L: Ruler of the Night, Guarantor of the day . . .

C: This day — a gift from you.

This day — like none other you have ever given, or we have ever received.

This Wednesday dazzles us with gift and newness and possibility.

This Wednesday burdens us with the tasks of the day, for we are already halfway home
halfway back to committees and memos,
halfway back to calls and appointments,
halfway on to next Sunday,
halfway back, half frazzled, half expectant,
half turned toward you, half rather not.

Tonight IS Ash Wednesday,

though all our Wednesdays are marked by ashes —

we begin this day with that taste of ash in our mouth:

of failed hope and broken promises,

of forgotten children and frightened women,

we ourselves are ashes to ashes, dust to dust;

we can taste our mortality as we roll the ash around on our tongues.

We are able to ponder our ash-ness with some confidence, only because our every Wednesday of ashes anticipates your Easter victory over that dry, flaky taste of death.

**Today, we submit our ashen way to you —
Your Easter parade of newness.**

Before the sun sets, take our Wednesday and Easter us,
Easter us to joy and energy and courage and freedom;
Easter us that we may be fearless for your truth.
Come here and Easter each worship to experience
mercy and justice and peace and generosity.

We pray as we wait for the Risen One who comes soon.

Holden Evening Prayer - through psalmody

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

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 1“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.

2“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. 3But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5“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. 6But 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.

16“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. 17But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18so 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.

19“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; 20but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Homily:

Learning How to Plant Seeds of JOY

Pastor Jules

Prayer for Forgiveness and Confession

As we move into this season of Lent, we confess our sins and we name the spaces where repentance and renewal are still needed:

Most holy and merciful God: **we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have failed to see your Divine Spark in our lives and in the lives of others. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven

Have mercy on us, O God.

We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have neglected and criminalized the poor and those experiencing homelessness. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, especially the Wahpekute Dakota on whose ancestral lands we now stand, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our neglect of human need and suffering, our contributions to oppression, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We repent because we have been brought up in a broken world that has taught us to prioritize power and isolation over communal action and care for one another. The habits

of oppression, of violence often come more easily than the practices of sharing resources and challenging bigotry.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Restore us, O God, and remind us of your never-failing love.

Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

Please help us claim for each other, for ourselves, for our siblings, your deep and abiding forgiveness. Remind us that your bold and expansive love shines on all of us and through each of us. Fill us with your Seeds of Joy. **Amen.**

Holden Evening Prayer continues with the Annuciation and Magnificat

(No Prayers from HEP tonight)

Offering

Offering Prayer

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you...

It is indeed right to thank you and praise you everywhere and always, Almighty God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; through whom and with whom you have entered every place, even into human flesh.

So with every place
that has known your presence:
with earth and sea and sky,
with unseen lands and familiar homes,
with cosmic expanse and creaturely bodies,
we praise your name.

God, you are here.

You have been with us in every age:
blowing the trumpet on street corners,
calling to us in quiet places,
inviting us to name our need
for clean hearts and new spirits.

But as many times as we turned toward your voice, we turned away again.

And so, in the fullness of time,
you sent your own Son:
a rabbi who healed in the streets
and taught in the synagogues;
a man who retreated to secret places to pray
and to upper rooms with his friends.

On the night before he died,
that same Jesus took bread, and gave thanks,
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering this table, the cross, and the empty grave,
we await his coming in glory and proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Send your Spirit upon these gifts.
Holy Wisdom, pervade every corner of this place and every crevice of our hearts.
Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Bring us at last with all the saints
into the brave space of your new creation, where we may meet your glory face to face.

To you, O God, Clay Shaper, Incarnate Child, Breath of Life, be all worship and praise, now
and forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer follows.

At the breaking of the bread:

Christ is in this place, remember the Joy of Jesus as you taste and see that God is good.

Let us receive him.

Please be seated.

Blessing the Ashes

Ash Wednesday: Blessing the Dust by Jan Richardson

This is the moment
we ask for the blessing
that lives within
the ancient ashes,
that makes its home
inside the soil of
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked
not for sorrow.
And let us be marked
not for shame.
Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are

but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made
and the stars that blaze
in our bones
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.

Explaining Ashes

You are invited to come forward now and receive ashes. Each of you is fearfully and joyfully made. Sinner and Saints. Broken and Beloved. And you are welcome here.

Meditation Music:

Lamb of God, Twila Paris version, ELW 336

Take Oh Take Me As I Am, ELW 814

Eat this Bread, ELW 472

Blessing of the Meal

Holden Evening Prayer – Final Blessing, Page 12