

# *Ash Wednesday Communion Service*



*February 14, 2024*

*Ash Wednesday Communion Service 7:00 p.m.*

**Prelude**

**Ringing of the Church Bells**

**Announcements**

L When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem to die on the cross for us.

**C So we set our faces to the cross of Christ this Ash Wednesday, and there we face our sins.**

L Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

**C The Law makes us face our sins head on, and we come to the cross of Christ confessing.**

L For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

**C We face our sins this day.**

L But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

**C We who have faced our sins and confessed them, are now forgiven.**

L We are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**C We thank you, Jesus, for facing the cross and facing our sins for us.**

**Amen.**

**Opening Hymn LBW #439 – “*What A Friend We Have In Jesus*”**

**<sup>1</sup>What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!  
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,  
Oh, what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer!**

**<sup>2</sup>Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful,  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness;  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.**

**<sup>3</sup>Are we weak and heavy-laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,  
Thou wilt find a solace there.**

**P** Gracious Lord, ashes remind us of our human frailty and mortality. You are eternal, but we are limited in our days. Someday we will return to dust and ashes. You remind us of this in your Word.

**C** **Dust we are and to dust we shall return.** (Genesis 3:19, Psalm 90:3)

**P** Ashes speak of condemnation for sin. When Adam fell into sin, judgment and death came to all. Since we all are born into sin we are marked for death and ashes.

**C** **Dust we are and to dust we shall return.**

**P** Ashes speak of our total dependence upon you, O God. We are but frail human beings who must rely upon you, Father. We think we are capable of taking care of ourselves and make our own plans for greatness. However, so often these plans fail and crumble into ashes.

**C** **Dust we are and to dust we shall return.**

**P** Ashes speak of our humiliation and repentance. As people in the Bible humbled themselves and expressed their repentance and mourning in the signs of sackcloth and ashes, we also humble ourselves before you, O God, as we ask you to forgive our sins through Jesus Christ, our Lord. As we repent we put on dust and ashes.

**C** **Dust we are and to dust we shall return.**

**P** People of God, as we see the meaning of ashes and dust for us as Christians, we now make our earnest confession unto the Lord.

**☐ Almighty God, you have always warned your people against trusting in false gods. We are sinful and this nature has given birth to sinful deeds: things we have done and things we have left undone. We are but dust and ash of the ground and we deserve nothing more than to return to the dust. Though we deserve your stern judgment, but for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, Forgive and renew us. Amen**

You have heard the Word of the Lord, “Repent and believe the gospel.”

With these words, Jesus began His ministry and now directs us to make repentance and hear his good news. Therefore, as you have made repentance, now hear the gospel. I, as a called and ordained servant of Christ, announce to you the grace of God. Your sins are forgiven, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*The imposition of ashes will follow. Those who desire to receive ashes may come forward at the Usher’s direction. The minister applies ashes to the forehead of each person with these words: **REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE DUST, AND TO DUST YOU SHALL RETURN.***

### **First Reading**

### **Joel 2:12–19**

“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping, and mourning; <sup>13</sup> And tear your heart and not *merely* your garments.” Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in mercy And relenting of catastrophe. <sup>14</sup> Who knows, He might turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him, *Resulting in* a grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God. <sup>15</sup> Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, <sup>16</sup> Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. Have the groom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber. <sup>17</sup> Let the priests, the LORD’s ministers, Weep between the porch and the altar, And let them say, “Spare Your people, LORD, And do not make Your inheritance a disgrace, With the nations jeering at them. Why should *those* among the peoples say, ‘Where is their God?’” <sup>18</sup> Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, And will have compassion for His people. <sup>19</sup> The LORD will answer and say to His people, “Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine, and oil, And you will be satisfied *in full* with them; And I will never again make you a disgrace among the nations.

## Psalm 41

P Blessed is the one who considers the poor!

C **In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him;**

P the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land;

C **You do not give him up to the will of his enemies.**

P The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health.

C **As for me, I said, “O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against You!”**

P My enemies say of me in malice, “When will he die and his name perish?”

C **And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words,  
while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad.**

P All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me.

C **They say, “A deadly thing is poured out on him;  
he will not rise again from where he lies.”**

P Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

C **But You, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them!**

P By this I know that You delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.

C **But You have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in Your presence forever.**

## Second Reading

*2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10*

<sup>20</sup>Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**6** And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—<sup>2</sup>for He says, “AT A FAVORABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON A DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.”

Behold, now is “A FAVORABLE TIME,” behold, now is “A DAY OF SALVATION”—<sup>3</sup>giving no reason for *taking* offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited,<sup>4</sup>but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in difficulties,<sup>5</sup> in beatings, in imprisonments, in mob attacks, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,<sup>6</sup> in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,<sup>7</sup> in the word of truth, *and* in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,<sup>8</sup> by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true;<sup>9</sup> as unknown and *yet* well known, as dying and *yet* behold, we are alive; as punished and *yet* not put to death,<sup>10</sup> as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and *yet* possessing all things.

*Stand*

**Anthem**

**Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,  
Slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter

**Glory to you O Lord.**

“Take care not to practice your righteousness in the sight of people, to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup>“So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, so that they will be praised by people. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your charitable giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you. <sup>5</sup>“And when you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they will be seen by people. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But as for you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

<sup>16</sup>“Now whenever you fast, do not make a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they distort their faces so that they will be noticed by people when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. <sup>17</sup> But as for you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that your fasting will not be noticed by people but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you. <sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; <sup>21</sup> for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Gospel of the LORD

**Praise to you, O Christ**

*Sit*

Hymn

*“ In the Cross of Christ I Glory*

LBW #104

<sup>1</sup>In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.

<sup>2</sup>When the woes of life o’ertake me,  
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
Never shall the cross forsake me,  
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

<sup>3</sup>When the sun of bliss is beaming  
Light and love upon my way,  
From the cross the radiance streaming  
Adds more luster to the day.

<sup>4</sup>Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,  
By the cross are sanctified;  
Peace is there that knows no measure,  
Joys that through all time abide.

Let us confess our faith together through the Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,  
The Father, the Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
Of all that is, seen and unseen.  
We believe in on Lord, Jesus Christ,  
The only Son of God,  
Eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
True God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
Of one being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
He came down from heaven;  
By the power of the Holy Spirit  
He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
He suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again'  
In accordance with the scriptures;  
He ascended into heaven;  
And is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
And his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.  
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
And the life of the world to come.  
Amen**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.** (share this peace)

## **Offering**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have had mercy on our fallen humanity, revealing to us your holy will and sending your only Son to fulfill it in our stead. With repentant joy we receive the gracious salvation you provide through the sacrifice of his body and blood on the cross.

Strengthen us as we gather in remembrance of Jesus grant us to grow in faith and love; and gather us together with all the faithful to rejoice together around your throne in eternity. To you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all praise and glory now and forever.

**Amen**



In the night in which he was betrayed our Lord 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.

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name,  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil/  
For thine is the kingdom,  
And the power, and the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen**

**P** Come for the table is ready.

**The Distribution** (Please follow directions of the ushers)

**P** May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C Amen**

Let us pray

**P** Almighty God, you gave your Son both as a sacrifice for sin and a model of the godly life. Enable us to receive him always with thanksgiving, and to conform our lives to his through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C Amen**

## **Blessing**

May the Lord bless you and keep you.  
May the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you  
May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

## **Hymn**

### ***“The Old Rugged Cross” (1<sup>st</sup> Verse)***

**<sup>1</sup>On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suff’ring and shame;  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain.**

#### **Refrain:**

**So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross,  
Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
I will cling to the old rugged cross,  
And exchange it some day for a crown.**

(The Congregation is asked to depart quietly)