



**COMMUNITY  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
96 Main St. Enfield NH  
03748

(603) 632-5812  
<http://www.clcenfield.org>

Wednesday, March 2, 2022  
Ash Wednesday

#### **INTRODUCTION**

*Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.*

#### **GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**GATHERING SONG:** *O Lord, throughout These Forty Days (ELW 319)*

#### **GREETING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

#### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

*The presiding minister leads the prayer of the day.*

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## **WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 58:1-12**

A reading from Isaiah.

*Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and clothing the naked. Sincere repentance will lead to a dramatic improvement of their condition.*

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>“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.

<sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup>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?

<sup>6</sup>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?

<sup>7</sup>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?

<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>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,

<sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>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.

<sup>12</sup>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.**

### **PSALM: Psalm 51:1-19**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my offenses,  
and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my mother's womb.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,**

**and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away | from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways to offenders,  
and sinners shall be restored to you.

<sup>14</sup>**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

<sup>16</sup>**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.  
You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;  
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

<sup>18</sup>**Favor Zion with your good pleasure;  
build up the walls of Jerusalem.**

<sup>19</sup>Then you will delight in the appointed sacrifices, in burnt and whole offerings;  
then young bulls shall be offered upon your altar.

## **SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10**

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

*The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.*

<sup>20b</sup>We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup>As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

<sup>2</sup>For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

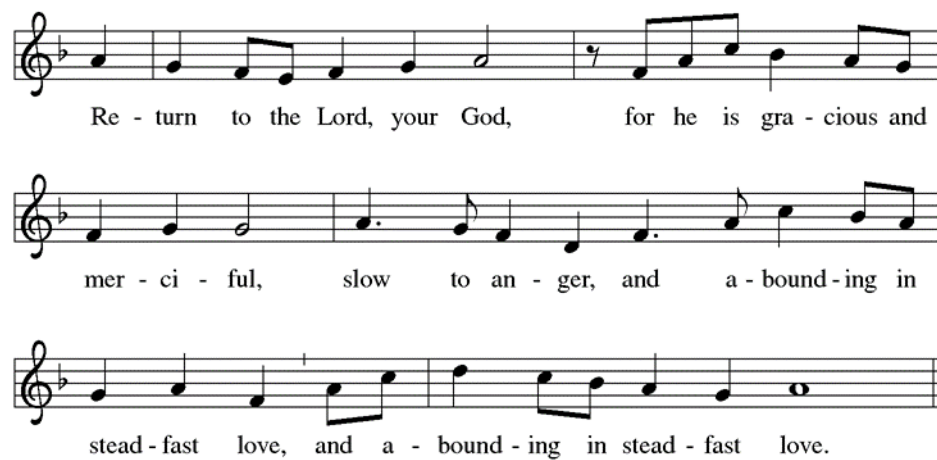
See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! <sup>3</sup>We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity,

knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup>truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

### GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

*The gospel is announced.*

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“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.

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

<sup>5</sup>“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. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>“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.  
<sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>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.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and 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.**

## SERMON

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** *Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church (ELW 321)*

## INVITATION TO LENT

### CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

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 not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

**Have mercy on us, Lord.**

We have shut our ears 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 all our past unfaithfulness, the pride, hypocrisy and impatience in 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 for the wrongs we have done. Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbor, 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.

**Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen.**

### **IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

*When ashes are used in the service, the presiding minister may say the following prayer.*

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.

May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*People may come forward and kneel or stand to receive the ashes.*

*Ministers mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:*

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

*After those who desire ashes have received them, all may kneel or sit, and the minister continues.*

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

**that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

**bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

*The presiding minister addresses the assembly.*

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

**Amen.**

## **PRAYER**

Let us pray.

**Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

**BLESSING** Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness;

be of good courage;

hold fast to that which is good;

render to no one evil for evil;

strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;

help the afflicted; honor all people;

love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SENDING SONG:** *All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night (ELW 565)*

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