

**The Holy Friendship
of
St. James Episcopal Church, Preston
&
Grace Episcopal Church, Yantic**

Ash Wednesday



February 17, 2021 at 7:00 pm

Livestream Ash Wednesday's service on Facebook:
*St. James Episcopal Preston or
Grace Episcopal Church Yantic*

The Reverend Kim J. Litsey, Provisional Priest in Charge
The Reverend Deacon Ronald Steed
Musicians: Mike LaFleur, Guitar & Peter Leibert, Concertina

Ash Wednesday

Welcome

Opening Hymn: #680 *O God Our Help in Ages Past*

Celebrant: Let us pray

Collect of the Day

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.**

The Lessons

Joel 2:1-2,12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near--
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread upon the mountains
a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
nor will be again after them
in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for the LORD, your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged;

gather the children,
even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.
Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.

Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations.

Why should it be said among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"

The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 103:8-14

- 8 The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.
- 9 He will not always accuse us, *
nor will he keep his anger for ever.
- 10 He has 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 his mercy great upon those who fear him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west, *
so far has he removed our sins from us.
- 13 As a father cares for his children, *
so does the LORD care for those who fear him.
- 14 For he himself knows whereof we are made; *
he remembers that we are but dust.

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

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.

The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

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

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

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 the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Homily

The Rev. Kim Litsey

Invitation to the observance of a holy Lent:

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 to repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Hymn: #383 Fairest Lord Jesus

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Remind us always that we are dust, and to dust we shall return. Grant that we may embrace our mortality and savor this time of penitence as we turn and remember that it is by your gracious gift we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

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.

Litany of Penitence

~Please kneel, 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.

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.

People: **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.

People: **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

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

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,
People: **We confess to you, Lord.**

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,
People: **We confess to you, Lord.**

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,
People: **We confess to you, Lord.**

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

People: **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,
People: **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

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

People: **Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.**

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

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

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

People: **Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

Celebrant: 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, 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. **Amen.**

The Peace

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

† THE HOLY COMMUNION †

The Presentation of the Gifts: The Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise Him all creatures here below

Praise Him above ye heavenly host

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer C

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Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

Celebrant: God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise.

People: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Celebrant: At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

People: **By your will they were created and have their being.**

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

People: **Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.**

Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.

People: **By his blood, he reconciled us.**

By his wounds, we are healed.

And therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn:

Celebrant and People:

**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.

Celebrant: And so, Father, we who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, 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, gave thanks, 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.”

Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving,

We celebrate his death and resurrection, as we await the day of his coming.

Celebrant: Lord God of our Fathers; God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.
Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.

Accept these prayers and praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation. **Amen.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

The 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,

for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore let us keep the feast.

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

Silence

A Prayer for Spiritual Communion

Celebrant: Let us pray.

God of love and grace, of justice and peace, we give you thanks that in the Holy Sacrament you assure us of your presence within us, within the body of Christ, and the faithful through all the generations. Grant that we who have witnessed anew these holy mysteries, though unable to receive the physical elements of the Sacrament, may be moved by your indwelling Spirit ever more fully to embody your holy and life-giving presence, reshaping in your likeness the world around us, until we are gathered at last into the fullness of your glorious and eternal presence; through Christ our Risen Lord. Amen.

Prayer after Communion:

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen**

A Blessing †

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 Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The service ends in silence.