

Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021

Preparation: For this service you will need your church directory, bread and wine or juice for communion, your Christ candle and Worship Guide.

Gathering in Silence: You will see only the Christ candle as you join our Ash Wednesday service.

Opening Sentences: Pastor Beth Hoyt

Leader: God sent Christ into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

People: God's love endures forever.

Leader: God is our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea, though the waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

People: God's love endures forever.

Prayer of the Day: Pastor Beth Hoyt

Almighty God, you despise nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who trust in you. Create in us new and contrite hearts, that truly repenting of our sin, and acknowledging our brokenness, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon, and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn: How Great Thou Art

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed.
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee: How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee: How great thou art! How great thou art!

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin.

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee: How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee: How great thou art! How great thou art!

Prayer for Illumination: Nicki Carper
Please join me in prayer.

Merciful God, your word is our way of truth and life. Create in us hearts that are clean and put your Holy Spirit within us, so that we may receive your grace and declare your praise forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture

First Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17: Nicki Carper

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10: Larry Carper

Hymn: There is a Redeemer

There is a Redeemer, Jesus, God's own Son.
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.
Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son,
and leaving your Spirit till the work on earth is done.

Jesus, my Redeemer, name above all names,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, hope for sinners slain.
Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son,
And leaving your Spirit till the work on earth is done.

When I stand in glory, I will see his face.
There I'll serve my King forever in that holy place.
Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son,
And leaving your Spirit till the work on earth is done.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21: Nicki Carper

Meditation: Pastor Beth Hoyt

Invitation to Observe a Holy Lent: Larry Carper

Beloved people of God: every year at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to

prepare for this celebration. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Normally, we begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life and marks the penitence of this community.

This year, because we are unable to meet in person, I invite you to consider another sign that will also remind us of the frailty of human life and mark the penitence of this community. For this you will need your church directory.

Over the course of time, we offend one another. Sometimes we realize we are doing it, and even do so deliberately or at least thoughtlessly. Other times we may not even know that we have upset someone with something we said or failed to say, but the wound is still real.

Tonight, I invite you to use your church directory. Read a name aloud, and then prayerfully say to that person: Please forgive me. I forgive you. In this way go through every name in the directory. Try to picture each person in your mind.

Inevitably there will be some in the directory you do not know. If you are unable to picture someone, or if you think they would be unable to picture you, then as you ask for forgiveness, seek forgiveness for not learning someone's name, reaching out in friendship, introducing yourself, etc. Forgive that person for not reaching out to you.

Grace will provide five minutes of music as you pray through the church directory. You will not be able to complete this task in five minutes. Put a marker in your church directory, and pick up where you left off, making this a Lenten Discipline, as you complete this forgiveness ritual over the days ahead. You may find some names where you need to return a few times – the need for forgiveness goes deeper with this person. Continue in this prayer throughout the season of Lent.

When the music Grace is providing ends, take a moment to extend this ritual of forgiveness to anyone in the room with you now, by going in turn to each person and saying, "Please forgive me. I forgive you." We will provide a few moments of silence to allow you time at home for this ritual of forgiveness.

Moment of Silence to Forgive One Another

Litany of Penitence: Nicki & Larry Carper

Holy and merciful God, 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.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness. For the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

Have mercy on us, O God.

For our self-indulgent appetites and ways and our exploitation of other people,

Have mercy on us, O God.

For our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves

Have mercy on us, O God.

Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrongs we have done. For our neglect of human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

Have mercy on us, O God.

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

Have mercy on us, O God.

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

Have mercy on us, O God.

Restore us, O God of our salvation, and show us your steadfast love.

Turn to us in your mercy and redeem us.

Hymn: Look Who Gathers at Christ's Table

Look who gathers at Christ's table! Hear the stories that they bring.
Some are weeping; some are laughing; some have songs they want to sing.
Others ask why they're invited, burdened by the wrong they've done.
Christ insists they all are welcome. There is room for everyone.

Clouds of light surround the table; ancient followers appear,
Saints confessing how they wrestled with their guilt, their doubt and fear.

Peter tells of his denying Christ was ever in his sight.
Paul relates his fruitless efforts to obliterate the light.

Their sad stories are repeated in a thousand different ways,
But they share one thing in common: they all end in thanks and praise.
For the host who has invited north and south and east and west
To converge around this table, where all life is fed and blest.

Bring your joy and bring your sadness and prepare to be surprised.
By the host who hands are wounded, who will open wide your eyes.
When he blesses bread and breaks it – truth and manna from above!
And then passes wine that wakens in your heart the taste of love.

Invitation to The Lord's Supper: Pastor Beth Hoyt

Hear the gracious words of our Savior Jesus Christ: Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

You are our God, and we are the creatures of your hand. You made us from the dust of the earth, breathed into us the breath of life, and set us in your world to love and serve you. When we rejected your love and ignored your wisdom, you did not reject us. You loved us still and called us to turn again to you in obedience and in love.

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with the heavenly choirs and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name: You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

Out of your great love for the world, you sent Jesus among us to set us free from the tyranny of evil. He lived as one of us, sharing our joys and sorrows. By his dying and rising, he releases us from bondage to sin and frees us from the dominion of death.

Words of Institution: Pastor Beth Hoyt

Prayer: Nicki Carper

Gracious God pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit unite us with the living Christ and with all who are baptized in his name, that we may be one in ministry in every place. As this bread is Christ's body for us, sent us out to be the body of Christ in the world.

Lead us, O God, by the power of your Spirit to live as the Lord requires: to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you, our God. Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ until this mortal life is ended, and all that is earthly returns to dust. Give us strength to serve you faithfully until the promised day of resurrection, when, with the redeemed of all the ages, we will feast with you at your table in glory.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

Take communion now at home.

Prayer: Larry Carper

God of compassion, through you Son Jesus Christ you reconciled your people to yourself. Following his example of prayer and fasting, may we obey you with willing hearts and serve on another in holy love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: For the Bread Which You Have Broken

For the bread which you have broken, for the wine which you have poured,
For the words which you have spoken, now we give you thanks, O Lord.

By this promise that you love us, by your gift of peace restored,
By your call to heaven above us, hallow all our lives, O Lord.

With the saints who now adore you seated at the heavenly board,
May the church still waiting for you keep love's tie unbroken, Lord.

In your service, Lord, defend us; in our hearts keep watch and ward.
In the world to which you send us let your kingdom come, O Lord.

Blessing and Charge: Pastor Beth Hoyt

May the God of peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being – spirit, soul and body- free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.