

# A Service For Ash Wednesday



February 17, 2021

## CALL TO WORSHIP

**Leader:** As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.

At that moment, heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

**People:** *And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

Leader: Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert....(Mt3:16-4:1)

**People:** *We seek to follow you, Jesus.*

*Lead us by your Spirit into a season of preparation and of growing faith.*

*Amen.*

**Song: Be Thou My Vision (Grady):**

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart  
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art  
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night.  
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word  
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord  
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son  
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise  
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always  
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart  
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art  
High King of Heaven, my victory won  
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heavens Sun

*and grace has made a people, children of his own household.  
Let us go forth in humility to be Christ to the world.*

**People: Thanks be to God!**

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,  
More than all in Thee I find;  
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,  
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.  
Just and holy is Thy Name,  
Source of all true righteousness;  
Thou art evermore the same,  
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,  
Grace to cover all my sin;  
Let the healing streams abound;  
Make and keep me pure within.  
Thou of life the fountain art,  
Freely let me take of Thee;  
Spring Thou up within my heart;  
Rise to all eternity.

Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high.  
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide;  
Receive my soul at last.

\*Text by Charles Wesley. Additional lyrics and music by Red Mountain Music.

*Minister: Go in peace, remembering that you are but dust and ashes and unworthy of being called the people of God. But also remember that you who were no people God by His love*

Heart of my own heart, whatever befall  
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all

*Minister: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all*

**People: And also with you.**

*Minister: Let us pray.*

*Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who repent. You are the source of all grace and mercy. Create in us new and contrite hearts, that we who come to you in penitence lamenting our failures and our sins, may receive from you forgiveness, reconciliation, and transformation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*OLD TESTAMENT: ISAIAH 58:1-12*

<sup>1</sup> Shout loudly; don't hold back;  
raise your voice like a trumpet!  
Announce to my people their crime,  
to the house of Jacob their sins.  
<sup>2</sup> They seek me day after day,  
desiring knowledge of my ways  
like a nation that acted righteously,  
that didn't abandon their God.  
They ask me for righteous judgments,  
wanting to be close to God.

<sup>3</sup> “Why do we fast and you don’t see;  
    why afflict ourselves and you don’t notice?”  
Yet on your fast day you do whatever you want,  
    and oppress all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> You quarrel and brawl, and then you fast;  
    you hit each other violently with your fists.  
You shouldn’t fast as you are doing today  
    if you want to make your voice heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fast I choose,  
    a day of self-affliction,  
    of bending one’s head like a reed  
    and of lying down in mourning clothing and ashes?  
Is this what you call a fast,  
    a day acceptable to the Lord?

<sup>6</sup> Isn’t this the fast I choose:  
    releasing wicked restraints, untying the ropes of a yoke, setting  
free the mistreated, and breaking every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Isn’t it sharing your bread with the hungry  
    and bringing the homeless poor into your house,  
    covering the naked when you see them,  
    and not hiding from your own family?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light will break out like the dawn,  
    and you will be healed quickly.  
Your own righteousness will walk before you,  
    and the Lord’s glory will be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup> Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;  
    you will cry for help, and God will say, “I’m here.”  
If you remove the yoke from among you,  
    the finger-pointing, the wicked speech;

<sup>10</sup> if you open your heart to the hungry,  
    and provide abundantly for those who are afflicted,  
    your light will shine in the darkness,  
    and your gloom will be like the noon.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord will guide you continually

*pardons those who truly repent and transforms those who trust in God for salvation with sincere hearts. In the name of Jesus who is the Christ I proclaim the forgiveness of sins to all who have drawn near to God in sincere confession. Know that you are reconciled, accepted, and loved.*

*Minister: O God, we implore you to so fill us with your Holy Spirit, that those things we do on this day may please you, and that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, lived in the service of others, and that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Minister: Rise, people of God!*

Action: The people all stand.

**SONG: JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL\***

Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high.  
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide;  
Receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;  
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,  
Still support and comfort me.  
All my trust on Thee is stayed,  
All my help from Thee I bring;  
Cover my defenseless head  
With the shadow of Thy wing.

*Minister: 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.**

*Minister: 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.**

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

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

*Minister: Restore us, O Lord, and let your anger depart from us;*

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

*Minister: Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,*

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

*Minister: By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,*

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

*Minister: Please be seated:*

*The Lord is patient with us, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance [2 Peter 3:9]. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:9] God so loved this world and this people that God sent Christ to reconcile the world to himself. The Good News for you this day is that God*

and provide for you, even in parched places.

He will rescue your bones.

You will be like a watered garden,

like a spring of water that won't run dry.

<sup>12</sup> They will rebuild ancient ruins on your account;

the foundations of generations past you will restore.

You will be called Mender of Broken Walls,

Restorer of Livable Streets.

*Minister: Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.*

*GOSPEL LESSON: MATTHEW 6:1-18 (NIV)*

**6.1** “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup> “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup> “This, then, is how you should pray:

““Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,

<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.'

<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

<sup>16</sup> "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

*Minister or Reader: This is the word of the Lord to you.*

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## HOMILY

### SUNG RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL: *Lord I Need You*

*Lord I come, I confess  
Bowing here, I find my rest  
Without You, I fall apart  
You're the one that guides my heart*

*Lord, I need You, oh I need You  
Every hour, I need You  
My one defense, my righteousness  
Oh God, how I need You*

**your people, by our own fault, by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.**

*Minister: 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.**

*Minister: Too often, 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.**

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

**People: We confess to you, Lord.**

*Minister: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,*

**People: We confess to you, Lord.**

*Minister: Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,*

**People: We confess to you, Lord.**

*Minister: Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,*

**People: We confess to you, Lord.**

*Minister: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to bear witness to others the faith that is in us,*

**People: We confess to you, Lord.**

**People: and renew a right spirit within me.**

*Minister: Cast me not away from your presence*

**People: and take not your holy Spirit from me.**

*Minister: Give me the joy of your saving help again*

**People: and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

*Minister: I shall teach your ways to the wicked,*

**People: and sinners shall return to you.**

*Minister: Deliver me from death, O God,*

**People: and my tongue shall sing of your  
righteousness, O God of my salvation.**

*Minister: Open my lips, O Lord,*

**People: and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

*Minister: Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice;*

**People: but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.**

*Minister: The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;*

**People: a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will  
not despise.**

### LITANY OF PENITENCE

*Minister: Let us stand together and confess our need of the  
Lord.*

**All: Most 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 lack any  
righteousness of our own, that we kneel before you  
unworthy of your love. We have often failed to be**

*Where sin runs deep, Your grace is more  
Where grace is found is where You are  
And where You are, Lord I am free  
Holiness is Christ in me*

*Lord, I need You, oh I need You  
Every hour, I need You  
My one defense, my righteousness  
Oh God, how I need You*

*So teach my song to rise to You  
When temptation comes my way  
And when I cannot stand, I'll fall on You  
Jesus, You're my hope and stay*

*Lord, I need You, oh I need You  
Every hour, I need You  
My one defense, my righteousness  
Oh God, how I need You  
You're my one defense, my righteousness  
Oh God, how I need You  
My one defense, my righteousness  
Oh God, how I need You*

### INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENT

*Minister: Today we begin a spiritual journey that will span  
forty days, from Ash Wednesday until Holy Saturday before  
Resurrection Sunday. In the early days of the Church, the  
season of Lent was a time of preparation for new converts as  
they readied their hearts to enter into Christian Baptism on  
Easter Sunday. Since these new members were to be  
received into a living community of Faith, the entire  
community was called to preparation. Also, this was the time  
when those who had been separated from the Church  
because of explicit sin would prepare to rejoin the community  
of Faith.*

*Today, the season of Lent is a time of prayer, fasting, self-examination, and penitence for all Christians as we prepare to celebrate Easter. Through this forty-day journey, we are reminded that we are totally unworthy before God, that we have nothing with which we can obtain salvation, and that our best efforts at being righteous fall far short. This season reminds us how much we need grace in our lives in order to live a transformed life that reflects God's love. We are called to renew our commitments and our faith as we continually acknowledge our need of God's transforming presence with us.*

*I invite you 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. To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now invite God to examine our hearts as we wait silently before him.*

**( Silence: Please Use This Time For Silent Prayers of Repentance and Dedication)**

*Minister: Please Stand:*

*Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.*

*Minister: People of God, come now in the spirit of penitence, and receive on your head in ashes the sign of the cross, the symbol of our mortality, a symbol of the cost of sin, and yet the sign of our salvation and promise of eternal life.*

### **CONFESSION - PSALM 51**

*Minister: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness;*

**People: in your great compassion blot out my offenses.**

*Minister: Wash me through and through from my wickedness*

**People: and cleanse me from my sin.**

*Minister: For I know my transgressions,*

**People: and my sin is ever before me.**

*Minister: Against you only have I sinned*

**People: and done what is evil in your sight.**

*Minister: And so you are justified when you speak*

**People: and upright in your judgment**

*Minister: Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,*

**People: A sinner from my mother's womb.**

*Minister: For behold, you look for truth deep within me,*

**People: and will make me understand wisdom secretly.**

*Minister: Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;*

**People: wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.**

*Minister: Make me hear of joy and gladness,*

**People: that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

*Minister: Hide your face from my sins*

**People: and blot out all my iniquities.**

*Minister: Create in me a clean heart, O God,*