#### INTRODUCTION

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that "now is the day of salvation." Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

**PRELUDE** 

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860–1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880–1931 Music: Irish traditional

\$LANE 10 10 10 10

# \* GREETING

- P Christ has called us to this place, gathered one and all by his Holy Spirit
- C We are followers of Christ who seek to hear the Word, live the Word, and share the Word.
- P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C And also with you.

#### THE EXHORTATION

P Brothers and sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of his creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn to him and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love--the discipline of Lent--help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

Silence for reflection and self-examination precedes the confession.

# **CONFESSION OF SIN**

- P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
- P Most holy and merciful God,
- C 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.
- P 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.
- C Have mercy on us, O God.
- P 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.
- C Have mercy on us, O God.
- P Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.
- C Have mercy on us, O God.
- P Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.
- C Have mercy on us, O God.
- P Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.
- C Have mercy on us, O God.

- P Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.
- C Have mercy on us, O God.
- P Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.
- C Have mercy on us, O God.
- P Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.
- C Have mercy on us, O God.
- P Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.
- C Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

# **IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

Come forward to receive the ashes. Ministers mark the forehead of each person saying:

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

After those who desire ashes have received them, the minister continues.

- P Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
- C that we may show forth your glory in the world.
- P By the cross and passion of your Son, of Savior,
- C bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.
- P 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.
- C Amen.

# \* PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC Chancel Choir

# FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming day of the LORD, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community declares that God is gracious and asks God to spare the people lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

<sup>1</sup>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-<sup>2</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart. with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,

<sup>14</sup>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?

<sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
<sup>16</sup>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.

<sup>17</sup>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?"

#### SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

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.

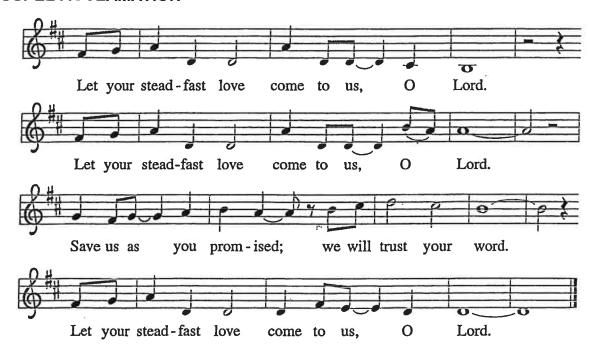
<sup>20b</sup>We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<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.

#### \* GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



- P The Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter.
- C Speak, Lord, your servants are listening!

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

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."

- P The Gospel of the Lord!
- C Thanks be to God!

SERMON Pastor Jon



# \* THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen

#### \* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

A brief silence.

- P Hear us, O God.
- C Your mercy is great.
- P Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
- C Amen.

# THE OFFERING



#### \* THE OFFERTORY

"Create in Me"

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.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.

Welcome to the Feast of Holy Communion. (Gluten free wafers available, ask the Pastors) We believe that in the sacrament Holy Communion, the crucified and risen Christ is present, giving his true body and blood as food and drink. This real presence is a mystery. All who trust in Jesus and call upon his name as Lord are invited to receive Holy Communion. Guests who are with us, who regularly commune in their home congregations, are also welcome. Children who have not yet been instructed in receiving the sacrament are encouraged to come forward to receive a blessing.

#### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P 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 testament in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

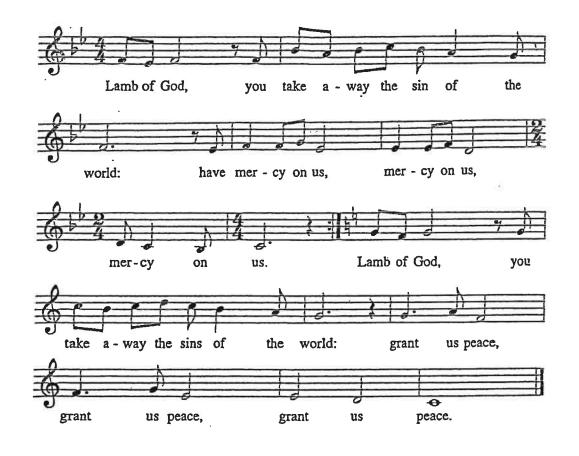
Do this for the remembrance of me.

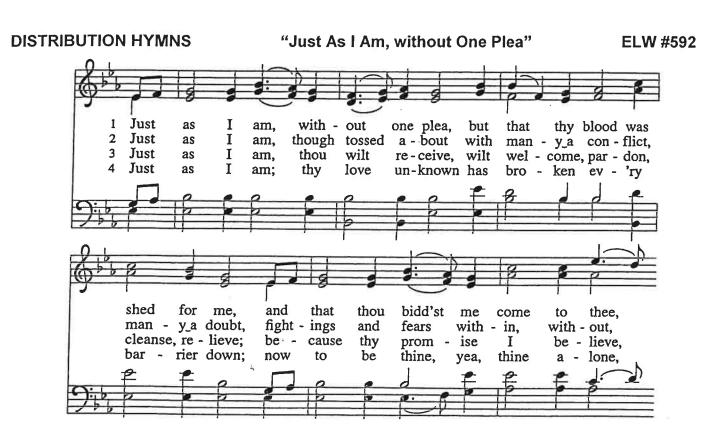
#### \* THE LORD'S PRAYER

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, forever
and ever. Amen

## \* INVITATION TO COMMUNION

- P The gifts of God for the people of God.
- C I am not worthy to receive you, Lord; but only say the Word and I shall be healed.



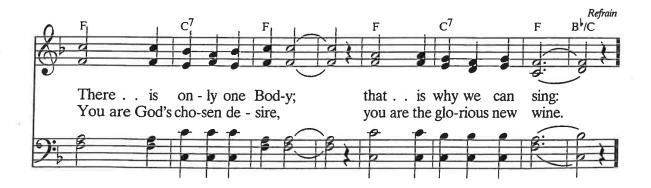




Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789-1871 Music: William B. Bradbury, 1816-1868

WOODWORTH LM





Text: Bob Gillman, b. 1946 Music: Bob Gillman, b. 1946 BIND US TOGETHER 6776 and refrain

© 1977 Thankyou Music, admin. (in Western Hemisphere) Integrity's Hosanna! Music

All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net # A-703413

- P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
- C Amen.

# \* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- P Generous God, at this table we have tasted your grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, now make us one in Christ, the Bread of life.
- C Amen.

# \* BLESSING

- P The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.
- C Amen





Text: Richard Gillard, b. 1953 Music: Richard Gillard; arr. Betty Pulkingham, b. 1928 Text and music © 1977 Scripture In Song, admin. Integrity Music THE SERVANT SONG 8787

All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net # A-703413

#### \* DISMISSAL

- P Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

#### **POSTLUDE**

Reprinted from Words for Worship, copyright 2023 Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission. Scripture quotations (except psalms) from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Augsburg Fortress under license # SB162048.