

WELCOMING OF GUESTS AND VISITORS

** Indicates a time to stand if you are able*

THE GATHERING

Prelude

Introduction

L 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.

***Call to Gather**

P We gather in the name of God: Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit.

C Amen!

***Gathering Hymn**

Softly and Tenderly

ELW 608



1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
 3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for



you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
 you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
 you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain



watch - ing for you and for me.
 mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!
 par - don for you and for me.



You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

*** A BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Psalm 51:1-17

P Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

C Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

P For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

C Against you, you alone, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

P Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

C You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

P Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

C Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

P Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

C Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

P Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

C Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

P Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

C Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

P O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

C For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

C The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

P Through faith, the gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

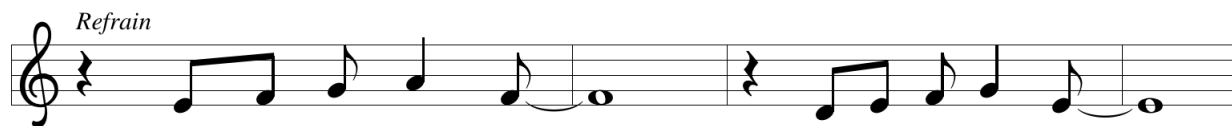
C Amen.

[Please, remain standing if you are able.]

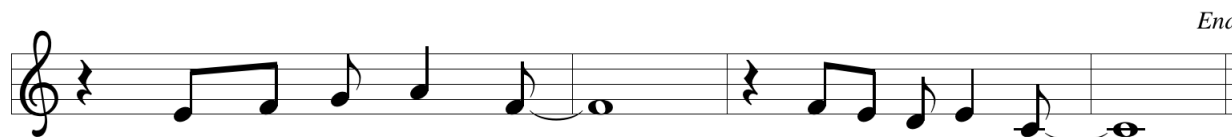
***Hymn of the Day**

Change My Heart

ELW 801



Change my heart, O God; make it ev - er true.



Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.



You are the pot - ter; I am the clay.



Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.

***THE GREETING**

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 PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Together we pray,

C 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. Amen.

[Please, be seated.]

THE WORD IS READ

FIRST READING

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

¹ 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—

² 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.

¹² Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting from punishment.

¹⁴ 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?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶ gather the people.

Consecrate the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children,
even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ 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?’ ”

L The word of God.

C Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

^{20b} we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 ¹ As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ² For he says, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! ³ We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷ truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸ in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true, ⁹ as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed, ¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.

L The Word of God.

C Thanks be to God.



*GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

¹ “Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

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

⁵ “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. ⁶ 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. [...]

¹⁶ “And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

P A reading of the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

P The Gospel of our Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

[Please, be seated.]



1 Our Fa - ther, we have wan - dered and hid - den from your face;
2 And now at length dis - cern - ing the e - vil that we do,
3 O Lord of all the liv - ing, both ban - ished and re - stored,



in fool - ish - ness have squan - dered your leg - a - cy of grace.
be - hold us, Lord, re - turn - ing with hope and trust to you.
com - pas - sion - ate, for - giv - ing, and ev - er - car - ing Lord,



But now, in ex - ile dwell - ing, we rise with fear and shame,
In haste you come to meet us and home re - joic - ing bring,
grant now that our trans - gress - ing, our faith - less - ness may cease.



as, dis - tant but com - pel - ling, we hear you call our name.
in glad - ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.
Stretch out your hand in bless - ing, in par - don, and in peace.

***THE INVITATION TO LENT**

P The early followers of Jesus observed the days of Jesus' passion and resurrection with various acts of devotion. It became their custom to prepare for the celebration of the great Easter mystery with a season of prayer, contemplation, and fasting. Today, we begin our observance of Lent with self-examination and repentance. Then let us continue through the season with prayer and fasting, reading and meditating on God's holy Word.

P We begin in silence as we listen to God's call on our lives for this season of Lent.

[Please, be seated.]

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

P Almighty God, you have created us from the dust of the earth. Let these ashes be a sign of our mortality, penitence, and humility. Remind us it is only by your grace and love that we receive everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

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

C In life and in death, I belong to God.

THE PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

L Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

each petition concludes...

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

L Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

C Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER** (*We always pray as Jesus taught*)

L Together we pray,

C 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.

THE OFFERTORY

In thanksgiving for God's blessing, we respond with our tithe and offerings.

Offertory Interlude

***Offertory Hymn** *Accept, O Lord, the Gifts – v. 1, 3* *ELW 691*



- 1 Ac - cept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to place up - on your ta - ble.
- 2 The vines were plant - ed, seeds were sown. They grew in your good plea - sure.
- 3 Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares we lift in prayer be - fore you.



We do not wor - ship as we ought but on - ly as we're a - ble.
What once was com - mon, dail - y food be - comes a ho - ly trea - sure.
Lord, by your grace now come to us, as hum - bly we a - dore you.

***THE OFFERING PRAYER**

L Together we pray,

C O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

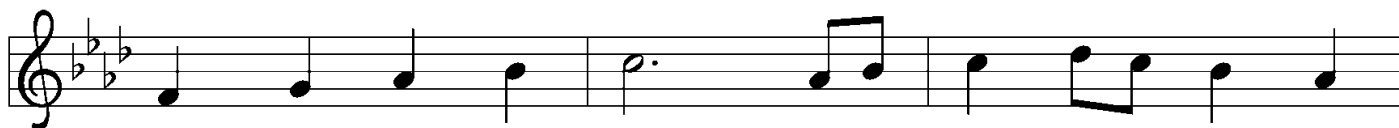
***THE BENEDICTION**

P May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise ✠ bless you now and forever.

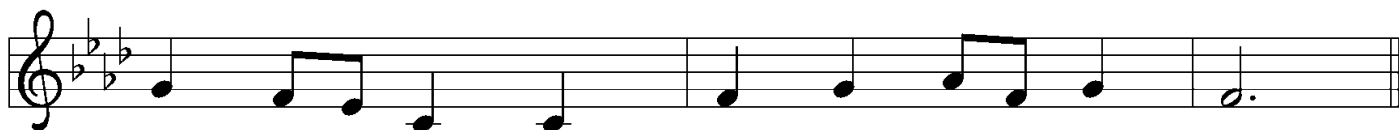
C Amen.



1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days you
2 You strove with Sa - tan, and you won; your
3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet you prayed and
4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, and



prayed and kept the fast; in - spire re - pen - tance
faith - ful - ness en - dured; lend us your nerve, your
fixed your mind a - bove; so teach us to de -
all our earth - ly days, that when the fi - nal



for our sin, and free us from our past.
skill and trust in God's e - ter - nal word.
ny our - selves that we may know God's love.
Eas - ter dawns, we join in heav - en's praise.

***THE DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Pray, fast, give alms. Humble yourselves, seek justice, love your neighbor, and know that you are loved, too.

C Thanks be to God.

Postlude