



February 17, 2021

Ash Wednesday Liturgy

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St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

306 N. Division Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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Today we begin our forty-day journey through Lent toward the light of Easter. Lent is to be a time of growth and refreshment for all of us.

Prelude: *O Mensch Bewein, dein Sünde Gross, BWV 622*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

On this day, the Celebrant begins the liturgy with the Salutation

Let us pray.

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.*

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

Carol Bennett

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?'"

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.

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Carol Bennett

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.



Hymn: *Before Thy Throne, O God*

Hymnal, no. 574

1 Be - fore thy throne, O God, we kneel: give us a con - science
2 Search out our hearts and make us true; help us to give to
3 For sins of heed - less word and deed, for pride am - bi - tious
4 Let the fierce fires which burn and try, our in - most spi - rits

quick to feel, a rea - dy mind to un - der - stand the
all their due. From love of plea - sure, lust of gold, from
to suc - ceed, for craft - y trade and sub - tle snare to
pu - ri - fy: con - sume the ill; purge out the shame; O

mean - ing of thy chas - tening hand; what - e'er the pain and
sins which make the heart grow cold, wean us and train us
catch the sim - ple un - a - ware, for lives be - reft of
God, be with us in the flame; a new - born peo - ple

shame may be, bring us, O Fa - ther, near - er thee.
with thy rod; teach us to know our faults, O God.
pur - pose high, for - give, for - give, O Lord, we cry.
may we rise, more pure, more true, more no - bly wise.

Gospel: 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.”

Sermon

Eric Braun, Seminarian Intern

“The paradox of faith, change, and the kingdom of God”

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

Things are just... different this year.

By now, I'm sure that sounds all too familiar, and it's getting a little old. It's more than OK to admit that. It's OK to say: “This is difficult.” It's OK to say: “I want things to be different.” As Christians, we might feel compelled to “always look on the bright side of life”, or, in a terribly Anglican way, keep a stiff upper lip. That can be exhausting. This is Ash Wednesday. The beginning of Lent, and at it's core, Lent is about change. It might seem strange to think about it this way, but in a way, change is what we're all about, and today I think it's worth remembering that for most of human history, Christianity was not the norm. Living in our modern world where Judeo-Christian culture is so closely entwined with our day to day existence, it can be easy to forget

that, if there weren't a profound need for change, then we, here, today, in this congregation, wouldn't exist. Yet here we are, because the ministry of Jesus, and the movement that his life on earth inspired, changed the world.

Something had to change.

There's a paradox in human beings about change. Most of us don't like it. We fear change, but at the same time, we need it. It moves us to new possibilities. Even new states of being. The problem, of course is that change is never easy. Whether we instigate a change, or find a change thrust upon us, it causes stress and anxiety, and that's unavoidable. The art of navigating when something needs to change, and more importantly that we are an active, integral part of it ...whatever it might be, is part of what it is to be Christian. We tend to think of faith as a constant. Immutable and unchanging. At the same time, we want our ministries to be adaptive and dynamic. We expect them to change and grow over time. The truth might be that God, and our faith are both, simultaneously: Constant and ever-changing.

This penitential season of Lent is full of contradictions and paradoxes, but these contradictions, if that's what they are, DON'T mean that the message is inconsistent. Instead, these opposing ideas that exist simultaneously, are invitations for examination for big questions about ourselves and our faith that season of Lent exists to help us through.

Because something has to change.

Like life, faith is complicated. OUR faith is complicated. Look at Paul's letter to the Corinthians from today. All the way through, he uses contradictions; matched opposites: In good repute and ill repute, honor and dishonor, we're condemned to die, and yet we know that we will have new life. Can both of these things really exist at once?

In this case, Paul is using these words to remind the church in Corinth just what following Jesus is about, because he's concerned that they've lost sight of the real message. Paul is offering them the chance to repent; which is to say he wants them to remember and RETURN to a relationship with God. Paul's use of imagery, both good and bad is his way of reminding the church in Corinth that they need each other, just as we do today. He's writing to help keep that community alive. In good times, and in bad.

Consider the ritual that would normally take place today. We would receive the imposition of ashes and hear that important refrain: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” This is a purposeful reminder that our mortal existence is transitory. Life is finite.

Paradoxically, it’s this very certainty that life will end, which imparts a sense of urgency to our existence. It’s this biological reality that acts as a clever mechanism to remind us not to take any day for granted. Each day is unique, and while the next day might be similar to the last in many ways, perhaps maddeningly so, it’s also important to remember that the next day will not be exactly the same. Something has to change.

Something always has to change.

This change. This, paradox, is at the heart of who we are as followers of Jesus. We are a resurrection people, abiding in hope and new life. But resurrection is only possible once Jesus conquers the grave; and of course, in order to do that, Jesus has to die.

We believe in redemption, and the certainty that God will never abandon us, even through we ourselves, like the people of Jerusalem before us, often turn away from God. The real GOOD NEWS is that a return is always possible, and Matthew’s gospel today shows us the way.

In the next 40 days, be mindful of, but don’t focus on the denial. Be aware, but don’t dwell on suffering. Be intentional, but don’t fixate on sacrifice. All of those things are a part of what we are observing today, and they are important in forming our identity, and relationship with God, but I think what Matthew is reminding us of today is that all of that mindfulness and intentional behavior is a means to an end.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; -- Matthew 6:19

Lent is not a time for suffering. God didn’t create us to suffer; though he knows that we will. Instead, this is an invitation to honest reflection on what it is that causes us, however briefly, to turn away from God. What distracts us? What delays us? What do we need, and how can God help us find it?

The challenge before me, and you, is not to ignore the contradictions of this season, or even of the strange days we are living through, but instead, look

inward, and see how those seeming contradictions can help us to become, and keep becoming who God created us to be.

The king that we acknowledge doesn't rule from a mighty castle, commanding armies. Instead, he's one who serves the least among his neighbors, and thus becomes the king of kings. The Son of Man, who can only conquer death after feeling it himself, thus breaking it's grip over us once and for all. Christianity is a contradiction. A story where the real victory lies not in a moment of fire and violence, but a moment of perfect, holy surrender.

Be humble today. Be honest, but don't be sad. Our time on earth is fleeting, but that makes joy all the more amazing. The end is only the beginning.

Because something can always change. *Amen.*

The Celebrant invites the people to the observance of a holy Lent, saying

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 of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now stand in silence before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is then kept for a time.

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.*

The following Psalm is then sung

Psalm 51:1-18

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; *
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- 2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness *
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions, *
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against you only have I sinned *
and done what is evil in your sight.
- 5 And so you are justified when you speak *
and upright in your judgment.
- 6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *
a sinner from my mother's womb.
- 7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
- 8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
- 9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, *
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- 10 Hide your face from my sins *
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 12 Cast me not away from your presence *
and take not your holy Spirit from me.
- 13 Give me the joy of your saving help again *
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
- 14 I shall teach your ways to the wicked, *
and sinners shall return to you.
- 15 Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.
- 16 Open my lips, O LORD, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- 17 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice; *
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Litany of Penitence

The Celebrant and People together

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.

The Celebrant continues

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, 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.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

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

We confess to you, Lord.

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

We confess to you, Lord.

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

We confess to you, Lord.

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

We confess to you, Lord.

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

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,

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,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

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

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;
Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,
That we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,
Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

The Priest, stands and, facing the people, says

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, being penitent, 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

Concluding Prayer

Keep this your family, Lord, with your never-failing mercy, that relying solely on the help of your heavenly grace, they may be upheld by your divine protection, through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Hymn: *Jesus, All My Gladness*

Hymnal, no. 701

1 Je - sus, all my glad - ness, my re - pose in sad - ness,
2 Hence with earth - ly trea - sure: thou art all my plea - sure,
3 Flee, dark clouds that low - er, for my joy be - stow - er,

Je - sus, heaven to me, ah, my heart long plain - eth, ah, my spi - rit
Je - sus, my de - sire! Hence, for pomps I care not, e'en as though they
Je - sus, en - ters in! Joy from tri - bu - la - tion, hope from des - o -

strain - eth, long - eth af - ter thee! Thine I am, O ho - ly Lamb;
were not rank and for - tune's hire. Want and gloom, cross, death and tomb;
la - tion, they who love God win. Be it blame or scorn or shame,

on - ly where thou art is plea - sure, thee a - lone I trea - sure.
nought that I may suf - fer ev - er shall from Je - sus sev - er.
thou art with me in earth's sad - ness, Je - sus, all my glad - ness!

Postlude: *Jesu Mein Freude, BWV 610*

J.S Bach

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Virtual Service Schedule

Holy Week & Easter

Sunday, March 28

Palm Sunday Liturgy

Wednesday, March 31

Service of Tenebrae

Thursday, April 1

Maundy Thursday Liturgy

Friday, April 2

Good Friday Liturgy

Sunday, April 4

Easter Day Liturgy

**All services will be
available starting
at 9:00 am on YouTube**