



**St George's Anglican Church, Malvern**



**Liturgy for  
Ash Wednesday**

**2 March 2022**

## GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

*The President enters in silence.*

*Silence is kept.*

*The President then sings or says the Introit 'Asperges mei':*

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

Have mercy upon me, O God, in your enduring goodness:  
according to the fulness of your compassion, blot out my offences.

Glory be to the Father, and to Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

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

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins,  
**whose mercy endures for ever.**

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Return to the Lord your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and  
abounding in steadfast love.

*Joel 2:13*

As far as the east is from the west, so far has God set our sins from us.

*We say together:*

**Kyrie eleison  
Christe eleison  
Kyrie eleison**

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy on us.**

Let us pray.

*Silence is kept.*

Almighty and everlasting God,  
you hate nothing that you have made,  
and you 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 brokenness,  
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, now and forever. **Amen.**

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

### First Reading:

A reading from the prophecy of Joel.

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?'

*Joel 2: 1–2, 12–17*

Hear the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm 51

**Response: Be merciful O Lord, for we have sinned.**

1. Have mercy on me O God, in your enduring goodness:  
according to the fulness of your compassion, blot out my offences.
2. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness: and cleanse me from my sin. **R.**
3. For I acknowledge my rebellion: and my sin is ever before me.
4. Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your eyes:  
so you will be just in your sentence and blameless in your judging.
5. Surely in wickedness I was brought to birth:  
and in sin my mother conceived me. **R.**
6. You that desire truth in the inward parts:  
O teach me wisdom in the secret places of the heart.
7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:  
wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. **R.**
8. Make me hear of joy and gladness:  
let the bones which you have broken rejoice.
9. Hide your face from my sins: and blot out all my iniquities. **R.**
10. Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me.
11. Do not cast me out from your presence: do not take your holy spirit from me.
12. O give me the gladness of your help again:  
and support me with a willing spirit. **R.**
13. Then I will teach transgressors your ways: and sinners shall turn to you again.
14. O Lord God of my salvation, deliver me from bloodshed:  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.
15. O Lord, open my lips: and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. **R.**
16. You take no pleasure in sacrifice, or I would give it:  
burnt-offerings you do not want.
17. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit:  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. **R.**

## Second Reading:

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Church in Corinth:

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, labours, 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 honour and dishonour, 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.

*2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10*

Hear the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand for the Gospel*

## Gospel

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.  
If today you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

**Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord according to Matthew,

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘Beware of practising 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.

*Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21*

For the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## HOMILY

### THE ACT OF PENITENCE

Sisters and brothers in Christ, from the earliest days of the Church, Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection.

It became the custom of the church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

At first this season was observed by those who were preparing for baptism at Easter and by those who, having been excommunicated, were to be restored to the communion of the church.

Over time, it was recognised that by keeping these days with care and attention *all* Christians might take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and grow in faith and devotion to our Lord.

The call of the Church at the beginning of this Lent remains, therefore: Let us prepare ourselves for the Great Paschal Mystery and the Feast of Feasts of the Church: the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ who, in assuming our humanity, and dying, destroyed death 'trampling down death by death', that we might be raised with him to eternal life.

So, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer and fasting, by self-denial and acts of generosity and by reading and meditating on the word of God, let us prepare for the Paschal Mystery, and keep a holy Lent.

*Silence is kept.*

## LITANY, CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God,  
though we have rebelled and wandered far off.

Let us then ask for mercy, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth,

**have mercy on us.**

Incarnate Word, redeemer of the world,

**have mercy on us.**

Abiding Spirit, giver of light and life,

**have mercy on us.**

For turning away from your presence,  
for disobeying your word and commandments,

**forgive us, Lord.**

For trusting in our own strength instead of yours,  
for betraying your trust and the trust of others,

**forgive us, Lord.**

For resisting your grace and refusing your blessings,  
for holding back from proclaiming our faith in you,

**forgive us, Lord.**

For damaging this earth and exploiting its creatures,  
for neglecting and wasting the gifts you have given us,

**forgive us, Lord.**

For failing to forgive as we have been forgiven.  
for judging others and bearing grudges,

**forgive us, Lord.**

For skimping on our commitments and relationships,  
for failing in hospitality,

**forgive us, Lord.**

For tolerating oppression, injustice, and wrong,  
for keeping silent when we should have spoken up,

**forgive us, Lord.**

For turning away when others have offered us love,  
for closing our hearts when others have needed compassion,

**forgive us, Lord.**

For all we have done unkindly, unjustly and dishonestly,  
for our careless speech and hurtful words,

**forgive us, Lord.**

Most merciful God,  
**we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,  
and in what we have failed to do:  
we have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;  
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.  
Father, forgive us.  
Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The President pronounces God's forgiveness, and all respond:*  
**Amen.**

## THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Dear friends in Christ,  
I invite you to receive these ashes as a sign of the penitence with which we shall keep  
this season of Lent:

God our Father, you create us from the dust of the earth:  
grant that these ashes may be for us  
a sign of our penitence and a symbol of our mortality;  
for it is by your grace alone that we receive eternal life  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*All may come forward to receive the imposition of ashes, during which the following is said:*

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.  
Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

**Amen.**

*Once the imposition is complete, and as forgiven and reconciled people, we share with each other  
a sign of God's peace.*

## THE GREETING OF PEACE

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.

**We meet in his name and share his peace.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

*All may exchange a greeting of peace with those close to them.*

## THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

*The gifts are placed on the altar, and the priest offers a prayer to which all respond:*

**Blessed be God forever.**

*The priest now begins the Great Thanksgiving:*

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.**

*The priest continues the Great Thanksgiving until:*

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven,  
we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

*The priest continues the prayer, including the words of institution, and all are then invited:*

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

*The prayer concludes:*

We worship you... in songs of never-ending praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

*Silence is kept.*

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray:

Our Father in heaven,

**hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done,**

**on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

## **THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

We who are many are one body,

**for we all share in the one bread.**

*The priest invites all to receive the sacrament or a blessing.*

*After Communion, silence is kept.*

## **THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

*All stand, as the priest prays:*

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy

you breathed into dust the breath of life,

creating us to serve you and one another:

call forth our penitence and acts of love,

and strengthen us to face our mortality

so that we may look with confidence to your salvation and new creation;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

*The priest then offers another prayer, which concludes:*

God of our pilgrimage,  
**You have fed us with the bread of heaven.  
Refresh and sustain us as we begin our Lenten pilgrimage,  
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The priest then reads the dismissal Gospel:*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.  
**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Jesus said,  
'Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them,  
does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost  
until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices.  
And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them,  
"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost."  
Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents  
than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.'

This is the gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The priest pronounces God's blessing and all respond  
**Amen.***

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

*All leave, as and when ready, in silence.*

*On this Ash Wednesday, we do not enter into conversation with each other after the Liturgy, but end in silence, reflecting on the call to prepare ourselves for the great Paschal Mystery that this season of Lent makes on us all.*

*To keep a true Lent*

Is this a Fast, to keep  
    The Larder lean?  
    And clean  
From fat of Veals and Sheep?

Is it to quit the dish  
    Of Flesh, yet still  
    To fill  
The platter high with Fish?

Is it to fast an hour  
    Or ragg'd to go,  
    Or show  
A downcast look, and sour?

No; 'tis a Fast, to dole  
    Thy sheaf of wheat  
    And meat  
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,  
    From old debate  
    And hate;  
To circumsise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent;  
    To starve thy sin,  
    Not Bin;  
And that's to keep thy Lent.

*Robert Herrick, Anglican Priest  
(1591–1674)*

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*We acknowledge the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation  
as the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we meet.*

*We pay our respects to their Elders past and present,  
acknowledge their continuing spiritual connection to Country,  
and affirm our commitment to walk together the path of reconciliation.*