

# ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**Ash Wednesday**

February 14, 2024



Ministers

Rector

Deacon

Senior Warden

Junior Warden

Minister of Music

Cantor

Administrative Assistant

The People of the Parish

The Rev. Christy Laborda Harris

The Rev. Kate Sefton

Jean Farmer

Meg Nalley

Miles McKenzie

Kristina Ibarra

Jun Kim

## Ash Wednesday

**Welcome!** If you are worshipping with us for the first time, we are delighted to have you join us today. Please fill out a visitor card by the entrance. The entire service is printed in this bulletin except for hymns which are in the blue hymnal.

### The Word of God

Presider Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

*please stand*

People **God's mercy endures for ever. Amen.**

Presider Let us pray.

Mystery of Goodness, by whose gaze we are called into being and held in life: teach us the secrecy of prayer which seeks no reward; the generosity of love which forgets itself; the gift of a treasure uncountable and unconsumed; through Jesus Christ, the Son of the Wilderness.

**Amen.**

### The Service of the Word

A READING FROM THE PROPHET JOEL (2:1-2, 12-17)

*please be seated*

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?'"

People            Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.  
                  **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 103:8-14

- 8 You are full of compassion and mercy, \*  
slow to anger and of great kindness.**
- 9 You will not always accuse us, \*  
nor will you keep your anger for ever.**
- 10 You have 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 your mercy great upon those who fear you.**
- 12 As far as the east is from the west, \*  
so far have you removed our sins from us.**
- 13 As a parent cares for a child, \*  
so do you care for those who fear you.**
- 14 For you yourself know whereof we are made; \*  
you remember that we are but dust.**

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A READING FROM PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS (5:20b-6:10)

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.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

*please stand*

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

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

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

SERMON

The Rev. Christy Laborda Harris

*please be seated*

*A period of silent reflection follows the sermon.*

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF A HOLY LENT

*please stand*

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 kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

*You may kneel as able*

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.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

**Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.**

PSALM 51

- 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 God, \*  
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.**

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LITANY OF PENITENCE

*you may kneel as able*

**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.**

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,

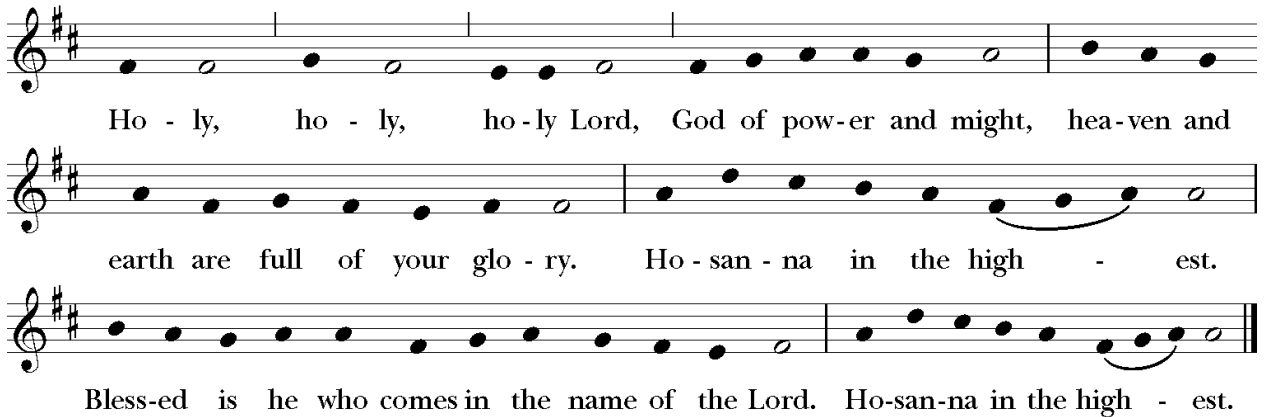
**That we may show forth your glory in the world.**



It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who was tempted in every way as we are, yet did not sin. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to live no longer for ourselves alone, but for him who died for us and rose again.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, hea - ven and  
earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

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Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

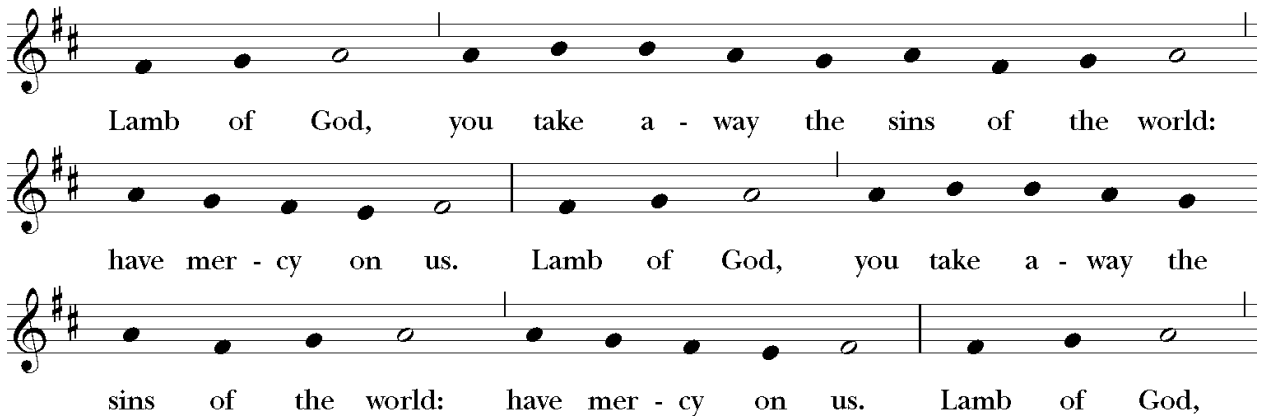
Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

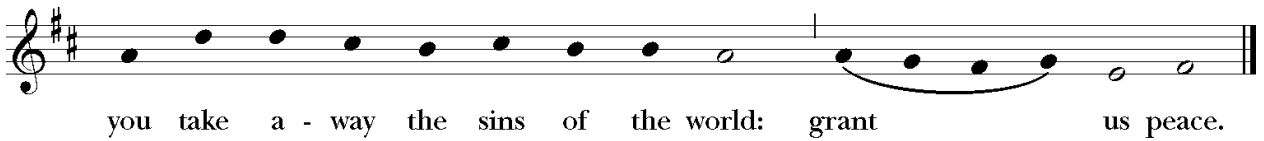
As Christ teaches us, we pray,

**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.**

#### BREAKING OF THE BREAD



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world:  
have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sins of the world: have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,



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*All are welcome at the Lord's table. You are invited to come forward when the ushers indicate and stand or kneel at the communion rail. Please extend your hands together to receive the bread. Our bread is gluten free. To receive the chalice, please help guide it to your lips. We are no longer intincting (dipping the bread). If you do not wish to receive the chalice, cross your arms and the chalice bearer will still say the words but not expect you to sip. If you prefer not to receive either bread or wine and would like a blessing, please cross your arms across your chest.*

## COMMUNION HYMN

## Open My Heart

### **Open my heart, open my heart.**

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## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

**Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## BLESSING

Grant, most merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever.  
**Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

I Want Jesus to Walk With Me

1. I want Je - sus to walk with me,  
 2. In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me,

I want Je - sus to walk with me,  
 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me,

All a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,  
 When the shades of life are fall - ing,

Lord, I want  
 Je - sus to walk with me.

Text: Negro Spiritual  
 Tune: WALK WITH ME, 88 8 9; Negro Spiritual; arr. by Nolan Williams, Jr., b.1969, © 2000, GIA Publications, Inc.

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DISMISSAL

Deacon  
People

Let us bless the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

