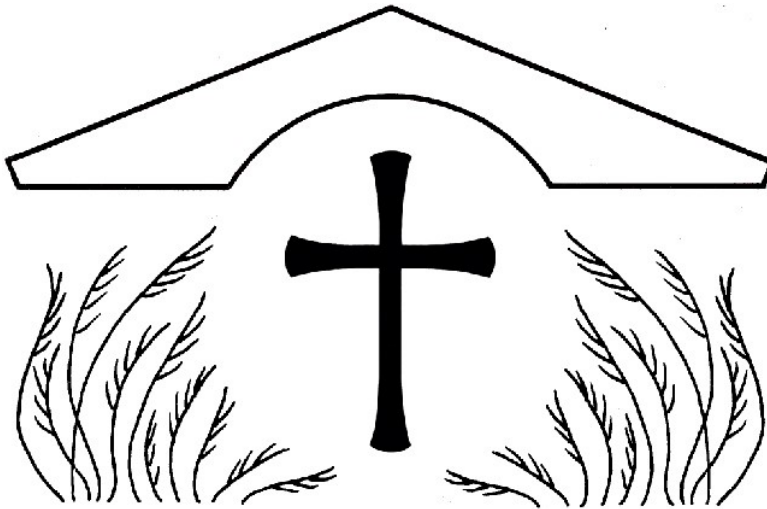


ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 17, 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

Welcome to the holy season of Lent! Lent is the 40 day period from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday. Lent is a time of return, a time of refocusing our lives and hearts. It is a time of austerity with extra prayer and meditation to prepare ourselves to appreciate the full joy and glory of Easter and the good news of God's power over death. Traditionally we do not use altar flowers during this season, giving the altar a simpler and more sedate appearance. And we save our joyful shouts of "Alleluia" until Easter. We make these changes in order to set this time aside and mark it as different.

Many people think that Lent is a fearful dark time, but we need to remember that we know the end of the story. We are loved by the God who is stronger than death. There is nothing to fear! We are not observing Lent because we were bad or in order to make God love us. We are observing Lent because we love God and we want to experience God's love for us even more fully.

"Walking in the Wilderness" is a Lenten service written by Pat Bennett and published by the Iona Community.

The Gathering of the Community

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Be Still and Know

please stand

Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that I

am. Be still and know. Be still. Be. Be.

As desired Final

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Presider Driven by the Spirit Jesus went out to inhabit a liminal place. For forty days and nights, homeless and weary, famished and footsore, he wandered and watched and wrestled ...

People **For forty days and nights, companioned and comforted by animals and angels, he traversed and tested and tempered... And then, knowing who he was, seeing where he must go, understanding what he should do, Jesus, filled with the Spirit, returned from the uncharted place to do the work of the Kingdom.**

Presider Jesus, by your example you challenge us to make this season a journey of discovery;

People **As we leave comforting landmarks behind to inhabit and explore our own uncharted places, help us to discern who we are and embrace what we might become.**

Presider Jesus, by your words and actions you show us how to watch and wait and wrestle;

People **As we listen now to those familiar stories and savor afresh your wit and wisdom, help us to recognize where we are and envisage where we need to move to.**

Presider Jesus, you offer us your company in the known and the unknown places;

People **As we touch hands with you now through story and song, and in bread and wine, help us to better understand the threads of our lives and see how to weave them with yours into the patterns of God's Kingdom.**

CONFESSION

Deacon God of the in-between thin places, you draw us into the quietness of the desert so that we can encounter ourselves...

People **But we confess that all too often we stubbornly cling to false images rather than face the necessity of change.**

Deacon You call us into the emptiness of the desert so that we can confront our desires...

People **But we confess that all too often we continue to choose our own comfort rather than serving the needs of others.**

Deacon You drive us into the dangers of the desert so that we can engage with your Kingdom...

People **But we confess that all too often we prefer the smooth roads of safety over the perilous pathways of justice.**

Forgive us, O God, wherever we have chosen to be, or do, or dare less than you have asked of us; and as we walk on in the desert with you, help us watch and wrestle with these things so that we might choose differently in future.

ABSOLUTION

God forgives you.
Forgive others;
Forgive yourself.

God strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal. **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

Lord of the new covenant, in Christ you draw all people to yourself: may we die with him to the powers of hate and let him show us a world loved by you, through Jesus Christ, the fruitful grain. **Amen.**

A READING FROM THE PROPHET JEREMIAH (31:31-34)

please be seated

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

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

People **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 51:1-13

- 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.**

A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS (5:5-10)

Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;
as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

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

People **Thanks be to God.**

GOPEL READING

John 12:20-33

please stand

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

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

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it

and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

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

HYMN

Guide Our Feet

please stand

1. 2.

Guide our feet, God, walk our path, be the wind up - on our back. Grant us strength to

car - ry on, rest at dusk and joy at dawn. A - men.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains two verses of the hymn. The first verse is marked '1.' and the second '2.'. The lyrics are: 'Guide our feet, God, walk our path, be the wind up - on our back. Grant us strength to' and 'car - ry on, rest at dusk and joy at dawn. A - men.' The music consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests and ties.

Text: Ivar Hillesland, b. 1979

Music: ST. FRANCIS PILGRIMAGE, Ivar Hillesland

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

In penitence and faith let us make our prayer, asking for mercy and grace, saying: God, revealed in the world, **Walk, watch, and wait with us.**

For people in all faiths, that they may triumph over evil and grow in grace, God, revealed in the world, **Walk, watch, and wait with us.**

For the leaders and citizens of the nations, that you will guide them in the ways of mercy and truth, God, revealed in the world, **Walk, watch, and wait with us.**

For all those in danger and need, the sick, the suffering, and the oppressed, that they may not be forgotten, and that we may see our way to reaching out in love and hope, God, revealed in the world, **Walk, watch, and wait with us.**

For the sick in body, mind and spirit, that they may know your power to heal, especially those we name now either aloud or in our hearts... God, revealed in the world, **Walk, watch, and wait with us.**

For those who have died and those who mourn, that they may rest in the assurance of your everlasting life and love, especially those we now name... God, revealed in the world, **Walk, watch, and wait with us.**

Presider Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who made us in your image, who gathers us in loving arms, and who placed your word on our lips and in our hearts. Receive the prayers we offer this day for all those in need in every place; grant us strength on our journey and breathe upon us with your Holy Spirit. We pray in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

PEACE

May the peace of God, the comforting peace of familiar presence, the untamed peace of wilderness places, the challenging peace of watching and wrestling, surround and shape your journey onwards. The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

*You are invited to pass the peace
distanced and respectfully.*

The Holy Communion

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Give Me a Clean Heart
Margaret Douroux

please be seated

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

please stand

*Ostinato Refrain

Turn our hearts to you, O God. With you there is heal-ing,
 whole-ness and for-give-ness, free-dom from fear, last-ing peace.

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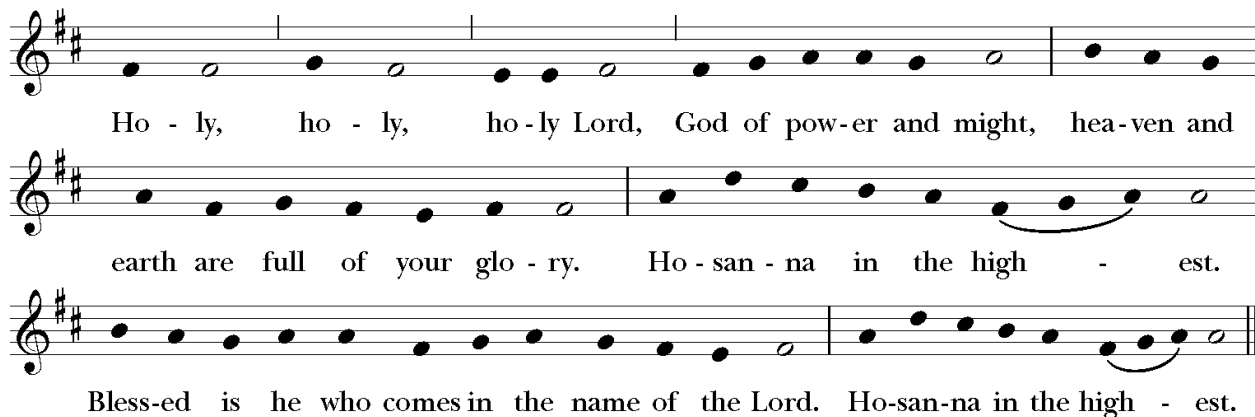
EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

- Presider The Lord be with you.
 People **And also with you.**
 Presider Lift up your hearts.
 People **We lift them to the Lord.**
 Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord.
 People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Like a tent in the wilderness the table of God stands open and ready as a place of sanctuary and safety, of hospitality and healing. So come, all you who are tired and travel-stained, footsore and famished; come with your fellow travelers and find companionship and comfort; for here, Jesus – who knows what it is to wander, watch and wrestle in desert places – waits to meet us and welcome us in, offering us rest and restoration, solace and strength, for the journey still to come.

Before going out into the wilderness of the Garden, Jesus sat down to eat and drink with his friends. To show them the challenge of the way ahead, and offer them gifts for that journey, he took bread – sustaining and wholesome – gave it to his friends and said, “Take, eat: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.” He poured wine – earthy and warming – and said “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.” He shared these gifts as signs of his continuing presence with them throughout time to come.

And now, remembering that moment, and recognizing that its promise is also for us in this time and place, we too break bread and pour wine to share with one another. And in that action, we recognize and affirm with joy that Christ is present with us now, and throughout time to come; and we join our voices with those of all creation in the unending song of praise:



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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God of the thresholds, of in between times and spaces, send down upon us now, and on these gifts of bread and wine, that same Spirit who drove Jesus into the desert, that we too may be tempered and strengthened by your Presence and refreshed and renewed through your love.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

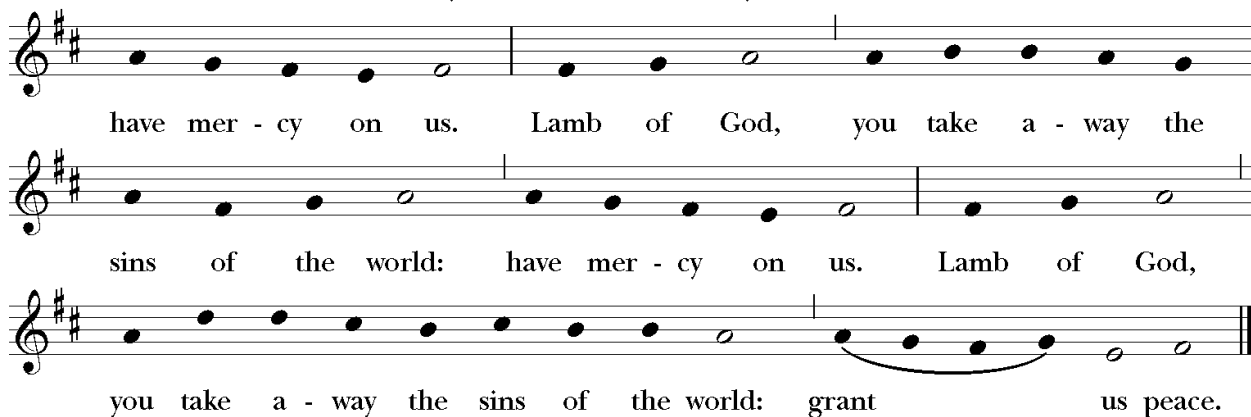
As Christ teaches us, we pray,

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,
 you take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

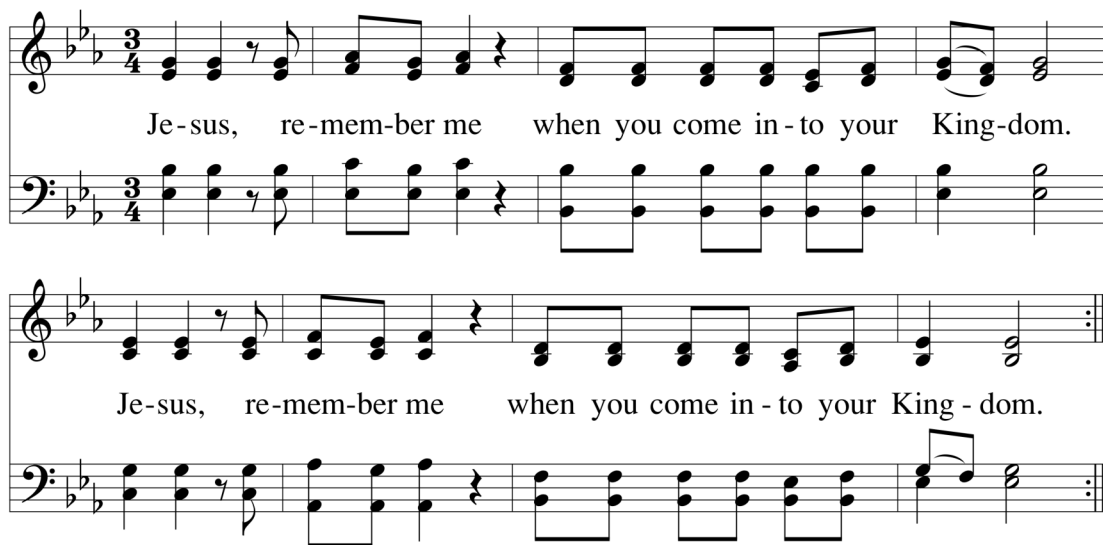
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The tent side is open, the table is set, and God waits for us to come in from the desert for a while and be refreshed. Wherever you are on your journey of faith,
You are welcome at this table.

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

Jesus, Remember Me



Je-sus, re-mem-ber me when you come in - to your King - dom.
 Je-sus, re-mem-ber me when you come in - to your King - dom.

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COMMUNION HYMN

O Wheat, Whose Crushing was for Bread

1. O wheat, whose crush - ing was for bread, O
 2. O fruit whose crush - ing was for wine, O
 3. O life whose crush - ing was for love, O

bread whose break - ing is for life, O life, your seem - ing end is
 wine whose flow - ing is for blood, O blood, your pour - ing out is
 love whose spend - ing was to death, O death, your mourn - ing is our

seed, a seed for wheat, our bread and life.
 life, our life in you, O fruit - ful vine.
 joy, full joy and birth to last - ing life.

Words: Delores Dufner, OSB (b. 1939). Music: *New Life*, Shirley W. McRae (b. 1933).

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POST COMMUNION PRAYER

please stand

We thank you God for nourishing us.

God has called us to journey for a season through the wilderness places; And so, as Jesus did before us, we will set out once more to wander in an uncomfortable landscape and wrestle with its challenges, that through the tempering action of the Spirit, we may emerge ready to do the work of the Kingdom. Amen.

BLESSING

Look with compassion, O Lord, upon this your people; that, observing this holy season, we may know you more fully, and to learn to serve you with a more perfect will; and the blessing of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RECESSIONAL HYMN

439 What Wondrous Love is This

please stand

DISMISSAL

Let us go forth into the world, journeying with the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

