

# St. Christopher's Church, Hinchley Wood

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – Ash Wednesday

Welcome to our "Virtual" Ash Wednesday Service. In whatever way you are joining us, via Zoom or YouTube, we pray that you may be able to experience the presence of God this morning.

Today we turn to God in repentance, asking that through the coming weeks of Lent we are drawn back to God's loving heart and renewed in our life of love with God and all God's people, beginning as we open our own hearts to receive forgiveness for our sins.

Please join in with the words in **bold** print.

## Gathering

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

*All* **and also with you.**

Brothers and sisters in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

By carefully keeping these days, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

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.

## Hymn: Father, hear the prayer we offer *(sung by St Martin's Voices)*

- 1 **Father, hear the prayer we offer:  
not for ease that prayer shall be,  
but for strength that we may ever  
live our lives courageously.**
- 2 **Not for ever in green pastures  
do we ask our way to be;  
but the steep and rugged pathway  
may we tread rejoicingly.**
- 3 **Not for ever by still waters  
would we idly rest and stay;  
but would smite the living fountains  
from the rocks along our way.**

**4 Be our strength in hours of weakness,  
in our wanderings be our guide;  
through endeavour, failure, danger,  
Father, be thou at our side.**

*Love Maria Willis (nee Whitcomb) (1824-1908), Samuel Longfellow (1819-1892)*

### Opening Prayer

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

*Silence is kept.*

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**All Amen.**

### Acclamation

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.  
The Lord is a great God, O that today you would listen to his voice.  
Harden not your hearts.

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

### Gospel: (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said, "Make certain you do not perform your religious duties in public so that people will see what you do. If you do these things publicly, you will not have any reward from your Father in heaven.

"So when you give something to a needy person, do not make a big show of it, as the hypocrites do in the houses of worship and on the streets. They do it so that people will praise them. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. But when you help a needy person, do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know about it. Then it will be a private matter. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you.

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites! They love to stand up and pray in the houses of worship and on the street corners, so that everyone will see them. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. But when you pray, go to your room,

close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you.

“And when you fast, do not put on a sad face as the hypocrites do. They neglect their appearance so that everyone will see that they are fasting. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. When you go without food, wash your face and comb your hair, so that others cannot know that you are fasting—only your Father, who is unseen, will know. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you.

“Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers break in and steal. Instead, store up riches for yourselves in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and robbers cannot break in and steal. For your heart will always be where your riches are.

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

## Talk

### Prayers of Penitence

Let us now call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God.

God the Father,                      *All* **have mercy on us.**

God the Son,                         *All* **have mercy on us.**

God the Holy Spirit,               *All* **have mercy on us.**

Trinity of love,                     *All* **have mercy on us.**

*All* **Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength.

We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

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.

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you, Lord ...

all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy and impatience of our lives.

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

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

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

Our anger at our own frustration

and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

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

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

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

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

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.

*All* **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

For all false judgements,  
for uncharitable thoughts towards our neighbours  
and for our prejudice and contempt towards those who differ from us.

*All* **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

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

*All* **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

*All* **Favourably hear us, for your mercy is great.**

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

*All* **that we may show your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

*All* **bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

*Silence is kept.*

*All* **We have not loved you with our whole heart.**

**We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.**

**In your mercy forgive what we have been,**

**help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be;**

**that we may do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God.**

**Amen.**

### The Imposition of Ashes/Dust of the Earth

Dear friends in Christ,

I invite you to receive these ashes or the dust of the earth

as a sign of the spirit of 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 or the dust of the earth 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 Saviour.

*All* **Amen.**

*We are invited to make a sign of the cross on our foreheads or on each other in your household. As we receive this sign the priest says:*

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

### The Lord's Prayer

Lord Jesus, remember us in your kingdom and teach us 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

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

**Amen.**

### Prayer of Spiritual Communion

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

### Closing Prayer

Almighty God,  
you have given your only Son to be for us both a sacrifice for sin and also an example of godly life:  
give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive these his inestimable gifts, and also daily endeavour to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen**

Hymn – Forty days and forty nights *(sung by St Martin's Voices)*

- 1     **Forty days and forty nights  
thou wast fasting in the wild;  
forty days and forty nights  
tempted, and yet undefiled.**
- 2     **Sunbeams scorching all the day;  
chilly dew-drops nightly shed;  
prowling beasts about thy way;  
stones thy pillow, earth thy bed.**
- 3     **Let us thine endurance share,  
and awhile from joys abstain,  
with thee watching unto prayer,  
strong with thee to suffer pain?**
- 4     **And if Satan, vexing sore,  
flesh or spirit should assail,  
thou, his vanquisher before  
grant we may not faint nor fail.**
- 5     **So shall we have peace divine;  
holier gladness ours shall be;  
round us too shall angels shine,  
such as ministered to thee.**
- 6     **Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,  
ever constant by thy side;  
that with thee we may appear  
at the eternal Eastertide.**

*George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870), Francis Pott (1832-1909)*

The Dismissal Gospel (Luke 15:4-7)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

*All*   **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them—what do you do? You leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and go looking for the one that got lost until you find it. When you find it, you are so happy that you put it on your shoulders and carry it back home. Then you call your friends and neighbours together and say to them, 'I am so happy I found my lost sheep. Let us celebrate!' In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable people who do not need to repent.

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

## Blessing and Dismissal

May God the Father,  
who does not despise the broken spirit,  
give to you a contrite heart.

*All* **Amen.**

May Christ,  
who bore our sins in his body on the tree,  
heal you by his wounds.

*All* **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit,  
who leads us into all truth,  
speak to you words of pardon and peace.

*All* **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

*All* **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*All* **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

*Please join us for a ZOOM coffee and chat after the service.  
You will be invited to share your video and unmute your microphone.  
This is a great time to share news and information.*

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