



Grace Episcopal Church

Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021 | 7:00 pm

Ministers | All of Us

Rector | Wren Blessing

Curate | Stephen Crippen

Music | Ann Strickland

Mercy would be a beginning, so mercy it is, the first word
to rumble out of the ground,
to run up, bitter or pure, from a struck open rock.

Hover down, mercy, like a shadow, a long-legged
shadow to secret bodies from the sun.

An outcropped rock curls like a hand,
a hollow to hide in, a hollow to die in.

Mercy begins in a desert, runs under bedrock.

Mercy takes a deep drill to vibrate loose.

Mercy juts up sharp and unexpected,
cuts a trench to catch a downpour,
low as a gash in the landscape can be
before becoming a canyon, a gorge, a riverbed.

Justice punctures too deep, rises too high,
ruins the way for mercy.

So begin. Crack open the earth's crust like bread,
and ask again for a hard mercy to rise
between soft hands.

~David Wright, from *A Liturgy for Stones* (Pandora Press U.S., 2003)

We are seated. A bell will ring.

After a period of quiet the Officiant says,
God's mercy endures forever.

The people respond

Bless the Lord My Soul

Words: Psalm 103 | Music: Jacques Berthier; offered by Members of the Music Circle

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's ho - ly name.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life.

The Collect

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Officiant Let us pray.

Holy One, you are full of compassion and mercy. You love everything that you have made. Form in us open, humble, and contrite hearts, that we may know the joy of your forgiveness and the wonder of your love. **Amen.**

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

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!

(reading continues on the next page)

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?'"

We remain seated and say the Psalm.

Psalm | 103:8-14

You are full of compassion and mercy
slow to anger and rich in kindness.

**You will not always be chiding
nor do you keep your anger for ever.**

You have not dealt with us according to our sins
nor punished us according to our wickedness.

**For as the heavens are high above the earth
so great is your mercy over those who fear you.**

As far as the east is from the west
so far have you put away our sins from us.

**As parents have compassion on their children
so do you Lord
have compassion on those who fear you.**

For you know what we are made of
you remember that we are but dust.

From A New Zealand Prayer Book

We stand together and sing

Gospel Song | Fast and Pray in Quiet Places

Words and music by, and offered by, Martin Cockroft

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the Gospel Song. The first staff is labeled '1.' and the second is labeled '2.'. Both staves are in the key of B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The first staff has a 3/4 time signature change in the middle. The lyrics are: 'Fast and pray in qui - et spa - ces'. The second staff has the lyrics: 'qui - et spa - ces'.

The Officiant then introduces the Gospel by saying

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

People Glory to you Lord Christ.

The 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.”

After the Gospel, the Officiant will say

The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Homily

The Invitation

The Officiant rings the bell to indicate a time of silence, then says:

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 by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We impose ashes on ourselves or on those in our household with the following words:

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

After ashes are imposed to all in the circle, we are seated and sing

Have Mercy

Words and music: Sandra McCracken

5

Have mer - cy on___ me. Have mer-cy on___ me.
Oh, help my un - be - lief. Oh, help my un - be - lief.

Oh, Lord, have mer___cy. Oh, Lord, have mer_____cy.

The musical score is written on two staves in treble clef with a common time signature. The first staff contains two lines of lyrics. The second staff contains two lines of lyrics, with a '5' above the first measure. The music consists of quarter and eighth notes with various rests and slurs.

After a time of silence, we pray together.

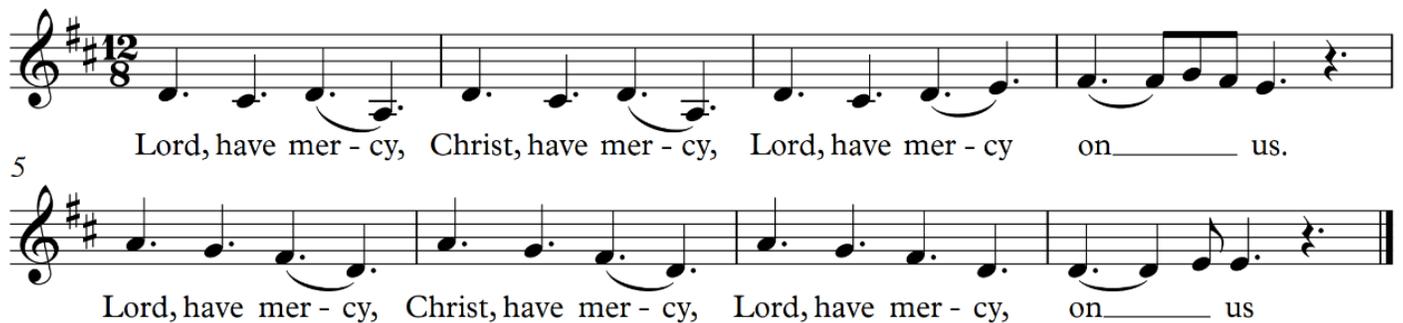
Confession

All Merciful God, we confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We sing together

Confession Song | Lord Have Mercy

Words and music: Stefan Andre Waligur; offered by Pearle Paar, Diane McGrew and Ann Strickland



5 Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy on _____ us.

Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, on _____ us

Officiant We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

All **We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.**

Officiant We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us.
O God of life,

All **we confess our self-indulgence and our exploitation of others.**

Officiant God of love,

All **we confess our pride, hypocrisy, and impatience.**

Officiant God of kindness,

All **we confess our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those around us.**

Officiant God of generosity,

All **we confess our greed and dishonesty in daily life and work.**

Officiant God of hope,

All **we confess our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us.**

Officiant God of compassion,

All we confess our blindness to human need, our indifference to injustice and cruelty, our prejudice and contempt.

Officiant God of mercy,

All forgive us.

Officiant Restore us to you.

All Grow your goodness within us.

We sing together

5 Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy on _____ us.

Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, on _____ us

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 12/8 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes. A small number '5' is written at the beginning of the first staff. The second staff ends with a double bar line.

Officiant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Officiant You are forgiven, be at peace.

We respond then say to one another

All You are forgiven, be at peace.

Officiant We pray together.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

**And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Closing Song | There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

Words: Frederick William Faber; Music: St. Helena, Calvin Hampton; offered by Barbara Hume



1 There's a wide - ness in God's mer - cy like the wide - ness
2 There is no place where earth's sor - rows are more felt than
3 For the love of God is broad - er than the mea - sure



of the sea; there's a kind - ness in his jus -
up in heaven; there is no place where earth's fail -
of the mind; and the heart of the E - ter -



tice, which is more than lib - er - ty. There is wel - come
ings have such kind - ly judg - ment given. There is plen - ti -
nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind. If our love were



for the sin - ner, and more gra - ces for the good; there is mer - cy
ful re - demp - tion in the blood that has been shed; there is joy for
but more faith - ful, we should take him at his word; and our life would



with the Sa - vior; there is heal - ing in his blood.
all the mem - bers in the sor - rows of the Head.
be thanks - giv - ing for the good - ness of the Lord.



The Blessing

The Officiant offers a blessing.

The compassion, mercy, and blessing of our Triune God guard, protect, and keep you, today and always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Officiant

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People

Thanks be to God.

Relearning to Pray

*We do not turn to prayers, they stalk us,
speechless with longing
so that it is almost a betrayal to speak them?*

In the dead hours
when we wake, terrified
of oblivion, its endless black sky
without stars, something
like a twisted metal angel opens its
mute throat
and silence emerges, combing
its invisible hair.

A sign, perhaps,
that surely the ultimate erasure, which we
have earned, is upon us? Was it
supposed to end
like this?
No, we say, clearly it is written, all
things shall end
in a garden of singing light, not this
night after night waking, adrift
like nothing
lost in a white cup.

But at last, out of reason and luck,
one way or another a prayer
finds us
and calls forth its voice.
Be with me, it says. Just that,
the words flying out alone into
an enormous room
made entirely of listening
and the sun rising over the hills.

~ Christopher Howell, from *The Cresset: a review of literature, the arts, and public affairs* (http://the-cresset.org/2020/Lent/Howell_L20.html)