

**St. Stephen's
Parish
Pittsfield, Massachusetts**

Mask (Ash) Wednesday

February 17, 2021



Our Mission

is to be the heart and hands of Christ: nourishing people, transforming lives.

Our Core Values

May be found on our Web Page

The Liturgy for Mask (Ash) Wednesday

February 17, 2021

Celebrant: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

People: God's mercy endures forever.

The Collect of the Day

Prayer Book page 264

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and 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 wretchedness, 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, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

First Lesson Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Psalm 103:8-14 *(please read responsively by half verse)*

8 The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.

9 He will not always accuse us, *
nor will he keep his anger for ever.

10 He has 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 his mercy great upon those who fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, *
so far has he removed our sins from us.

13 As a father cares for his children, *
so does the LORD care for those who fear him.

14 For he himself knows whereof we are made; *
he remembers that we are but dust.

Second Lesson 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Gospel Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Invitation to the observance of Lent

Prayer Book page 264

Praise Song for the Pandemic *(the People's response is in bold)*

Christine Valters Paintner

Praise be the nurses and doctors, every medical staff bent over flesh to offer care, for lives saved and lives lost, for showing up either way,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Praise for the farmers, tilling soil, planting seeds so food can grow, an act of hope if ever there was,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Praise be the janitors and garbage collectors, the grocery store clerks, and the truck drivers barreling through long quiet nights,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Give thanks for bus drivers, delivery persons, postal workers, and all those keeping an eye on water, gas, and electricity,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Blessings on our leaders, making hard choices for the common good, offering words of assurance,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Celebrate the scientists, working away to understand the thing that plagues us, to find an antidote, all the medicine makers, praise be the journalists keeping us informed,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Praise be the teachers, finding new ways to educate children from afar, and blessings on parents holding it together for them,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Blessed are the elderly and those with weakened immune systems, all those who worry for their health, praise for those who stay at home to protect them,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Blessed are the domestic violence victims, on lock down with abusers, the homeless and refugees,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Praise for the poets and artists, the singers and storytellers, all those who nourish with words and sound and color,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Blessed are the ministers and therapists of every kind, bringing words of comfort,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Blessed are the ones whose jobs are lost, who have no savings, who feel fear of the unknown gnawing,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Blessed are those in grief, especially who mourn alone, blessed are those who have passed into the Great Night,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Praise for police and firefighters, paramedics, and all who work to keep us safe, praise for all the workers and caregivers of every kind,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Praise for the sound of notifications, messages from friends reaching across the distance, give thanks for laughter and kindness,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Praise be our four-footed companions, with no forethought or anxiety, responding only in love,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Praise for the seas and rivers, forests and stones who teach us to endure,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Give thanks for our ancestors, for the wars and plagues they endured and survived, their resilience is in our bones, your blood,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Blessed is the water that flows over our hands and the soap that helps keep them clean, each time a baptism,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Praise every moment of stillness and silence, so new voices can be heard, praise the chance at slowness,

We are in this together, O Lord.

Praise be the birds who continue to sing the sky awake each day, praise for the primrose poking yellow petals from dark earth, blessed is the air clearing overhead so one day we can breathe deeply again,

We are in this together, O Lord.

And when this has passed may we say that love spread more quickly than any virus ever could, may we say this was not just an ending but also a place to begin. **Amen.**

Blessing of Masks *(All praying together)*

from The Rev. Mary Luti, UCC

**God of health and wholeness, of neighbor love and kindness,
bless our masks, our slight shields against great ills.**

We give thanks for those who make them, and those who distribute them.

**Bless us also, and everyone who for their own and others' sakes
put on this holy inconvenience every day,
remembering we are all in this together, our minds made up to love.
Amen.**

A Psalm of Life

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

What The Heart Of The Young Man Said To The Psalmist

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
**For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.**

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
**Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.**

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
**But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.**

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
**Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.**

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
**Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!**

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!

Act,— act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

Organ Solo “Savior, when in dust to you”

Gerald Near

Litany of Penitence

The Celebrant and People together, all kneeling as they are 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.

The Celebrant continues

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.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,
Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live, has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe his holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace

The Great Thanksgiving

Prayer Book page 361

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

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:

Celebrant and People

**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 people stand or kneel. Then the Celebrant continues

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.**

The Celebrant continues

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 forever. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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.

The Breaking of the Bread

Fraction Anthem

Celebrant Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People Therefore let us keep the feast.

Spiritual Communion Prayer

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer to you praise and thanksgiving. I remember your death, Lord Christ; I proclaim your resurrection; I await your coming in glory. Since I cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, I beseech you to come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. Amen

Solemn Prayer over the People

Bow down before the Lord. *The People kneel as they are able*

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; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Hymn 601

“O day of God, draw nigh”

St. Michael

1. O day of God, draw nigh in beauty and in power,
come with thy timeless judgment now to match our present hour.
2. Bring to our troubled minds, uncertain and afraid,
the quiet of a steadfast faith, calm of a call obeyed.
3. Bring justice to our land, that all may dwell secure,
and finely build for days to come foundations that endure.
4. Bring to our world of strife thy sovereign word of peace,
that war may haunt the earth no more and desolation cease.
5. O day of God, draw nigh as at creation’s birth,
let there be light again, and set thy judgments in the earth.

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People Thanks be to God.

Ministers of the Celebration

CELEBRANT

The Rev. David DeSmith

LECTOR

Diane Forsyth

PRAYERS

William Frazier

ALTAR GUILD

Marie Sutton, William Frazier

ORGANIST

Joy Mullen

VIDEO PRODUCTION

MusiChris DJ and Lighting Service

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