

# Ash Wednesday

## A Celebration of the Holy Eucharist with Spiritual Communion

*As we prepare to celebrate the Eucharist together, please take a few moments to still your hearts and minds and to prepare to receive Christ afresh.*



ANGLICAN  
DIOCESE OF  
NIAGARA

**Prelude:** O Soul repent you of your sin" BWV 622 J.S. Bach

### The Gathering of the Community

*Words of welcome and introduction.*

Bishop: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you all.

**All: And also with you.**

**OPENING HYMN:** Forty Days and Forty Nights (Common Praise #175)

1. Forty days and forty nights,  
you were fasting in the wild,  
forty days and forty nights,  
tempted and yet undefiled.
2. Burning heat throughout the day,  
bitter cold when light had fled,  
prowling beasts around your way,  
stones your pillow, earth your bed.
3. Shall now we your trials share,  
learn you discipline of will,  
and with you by fast and prayer  
wrestle with the power of hell?
4. So if Satan pressing hard,  
soul and body would destroy,  
Christ who conquered be our guard;  
give to us the victor's joy.
5. Saviour may we hear your voice,  
keep us constant at your side  
and with you we shall rejoice,  
at the eternal Eastertide.

### THE INTRODUCTION

One: Dear friends in Christ, every year at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life in the paschal mystery. We begin this holy season by remembering our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes, an ancient sign, speaking of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marking the penitence of the community as a whole.

I invite you therefore, in the name of the Lord, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination, penitence, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and by reading and meditating on the word of God.

## THE COLLECT

Bishop: Let us pray.

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.**

## The Liturgy of the Word

A Reading: Isaiah 58.1-12

Reader: Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!  
Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.  
Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that practised righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their  
God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they delight to draw near to God.  
'Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?'  
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day, and oppress all your workers.  
Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist.  
Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.  
Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?  
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?  
Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?  
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your  
vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.  
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,  
if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.  
The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places,  
and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up  
the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of  
streets to live in.

Reader: Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## The Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Reader: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

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

**All: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reader: 'Beware of practising 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.

Reader: The Gospel of Christ.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## The Sermon

*Words of reflection or teaching are offered.*

## The Litany of Penance

One: Let us turn to God in penitence and faith.

**All: Most holy and merciful Father, we confess to you, 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.**

One: 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: Have mercy on us, Lord.**

One: 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: Have mercy on us, Lord.**

One: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness:  
the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,  
**All: We confess to you, Lord.**

One: 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,  
**All: We confess to you, Lord.**

One: Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts,  
and our dishonesty in daily life and work,  
**All: We confess to you, Lord.**

One: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,  
**All: We confess to you, Lord.**

One: 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.**

One: For all false judgements, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbours,  
and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,  
**All: Accept our repentance, Lord.**

One: For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,  
**All: Accept our repentance, Lord.**

One: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;  
**All: Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great.**

### **The Invitation**

One: Dear friends in Christ,  
these ashes are a sign of penitence and humility:  
they remind us that we are to die to sin and be born again as a new creation.  
As we begin the journey of Lent, I invite you to receive in your own hearts,  
this mark of pilgrimage, and commit yourself afresh to the journey of faith,  
looking always to Jesus Christ.  
**All: Amen**

### **The Blessing of the Ashes**

Bishop: God our Father, you create us from the dust of the earth:  
grant that these ashes 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.<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Common Worship, Church of England

## The Reception of the Ashes

One: We few who are gathered, receive these ashes on behalf of our community of faith; mindful of all God's pilgrim people, walking the way of Lent, seeking the footsteps of Christ.

*The ashes are imposed upon those present without the use of words.*

*Following the imposition those gathered say:*

Bishop: Remembering that we are dust and to dust we shall return;

**All: We receive these ashes, on behalf of God's Church, who cannot gather in this place, marking in our bodies, our minds and our hearts, sorrow for our sins, faithfulness to Christ, and joy as we look with longing, to the Resurrection. Amen.**

Bishop: The Lord look upon us with mercy, grant us forgiveness, strength for the journey, and grace to rely upon him in all our need, for the sake of Jesus Christ our saviour.

**All: Amen.**

## The Peace

Bishop: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**All: And also with you.**

## THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

### The Prayer over the Gifts

Bishop: Risen Lord and Saviour, present among us with the wealth of your love, cleanse us from sin and give us the faith to offer our praise and grow in your grace.

**All: Amen.**

### The Eucharistic Prayer

Bishop: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

Bishop: Lift up your hearts in adoration.

**All: We lift them to our God.**

Bishop: Let us give thanks to the Living God.

**All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Bishop: Eternal God, Source of all being, we give you thanks and praise for your faithful love. You call us into friendship with you and one another to be your holy people, a sign of your presence in the world.

Bishop: When those we trust betray us, unfailingly you remain with us.  
When we injure others, you confront us in your love  
and call us to the paths of righteousness.

You stand with the weak, and those, broken and alone,  
whom you have always welcomed home making the first last, and the last first.

Therefore we raise our voices with angels and archangels,  
forever praising you and saying (singing):

All: **Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Bishop: Blessed are you, O Holy One:  
when Hagar was driven into the wilderness  
you followed her and gave her hope.  
When Joseph was sold into bondage,  
you turned malice to your people's good.  
When you called Israel out of slavery,  
you brought them through the wilderness  
into the promised land.  
When your people were taken into exile  
you wept with them by the river of Babylon  
and carried them home.

All: **Restore us, O God, let your face shine!**

Bishop: At the right time you sent your Anointed One  
to stand with the poor, the outcast, and the oppressed.  
Jesus touched lepers, and the sick, and healed them.  
He accepted water from a woman of Samaria  
and offered her the water of new life.  
Christ knew the desolation of the cross  
and opened the way for all humanity  
into the redemption of your reconciling love.

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus, at supper with his friends,  
took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread,  
gave it to them, and said, "Take and 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."

Loving and Holy One,  
recalling Christ's death and resurrection, we offer you these gifts,  
longing for the bread of tomorrow and the wine of the age to come.

Therefore we proclaim our hope.

**All: Dying you destroyed our death,  
rising you restored our life.  
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Bishop: Pour out your Spirit on these gifts that through them  
you may sustain us in our hunger for your peace.  
We hold before you all whose lives are marked by suffering,  
our sisters and brothers.  
When we are broken and cast aside, embrace us in your love.

**All: Restore us, O God, let your face shine!**

Bishop: Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours,  
O Source of all life, now and for ever.

**All: Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Bishop: As our Saviour taught us, let us pray,

**All: 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.**

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

Bishop: "I am the bread which has come down from heaven," says the Lord.

**All: Give us this bread for ever.**

Bishop: "I am the vine, you are the branches."

**All: May we dwell in Christ, as Christ lives in us.**

Bishop: The gifts of God for the People of God.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **Invitation to Spiritual Communion**

Bishop: Dear friends, I invite you in this moment, wherever you may be,  
to receive Christ, in communion with the saints,  
and the gathering of God's people, unseen and yet present with us now.  
Many are made one.

Bishop: We receive you Lord Jesus Christ,  
**All: we welcome your presence in us,  
and together proclaim our love for you;  
with our hearts, minds, our souls and our strength,  
with the saints we worship you,  
with the angels we adore you,  
with your whole Church we proclaim your reign.  
Come to us, though many,  
and make us one in you. Amen.**

Bishop: I invite you in the silence of your own hearts  
or using one or more of the prayers in the service sheet  
to make your own act of Communion with Christ.

*Silence is kept during which time the congregation prays one or more of the prayers of reception below.*

## **Prayers of Reception**

**One: I worship and adore you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
present in bread and wine, and present in your people,  
who are gathered in spirit.  
In this moment I join with them to receive you in my heart, and in our community.  
May you, enthroned on the altar, be now enthroned in my heart,  
may you, present in bread and wine, feed and renew my soul,  
may you, who gives yourself to us again,  
fill us with grace, and heavenly blessing.  
Even as I am fed, may my hunger for you  
and for your reign of justice and peace increase,  
that I may, with your Spirit, work for that day  
when your kingdom shall come on earth as it is heaven. Amen.**

*Or*

**One: Come Lord Jesus and make in my heart your dwelling place and home.  
I seek to love you with all my heart, mind, soul and strength,  
and so, through your presence in bread and wine  
I receive you afresh and praise you for you are my God.  
As you fill me, so may my love for you and for all your people,  
rise and overflow, that with joy and thanksgiving,  
I may serve you in the world you love. Amen.**

*Or*

**One: Jesus, I believe that you are present with us in the sacrament of bread and wine.  
I love you and I desire your presence afresh in my life.  
Since I cannot now receive the bread and wine of the altar,  
come spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace you and unite myself to you; never let me be separated from you.<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> Based on a prayer by St. Alphonsus Maria de' Liguori

*Or*

**One:** Holy Jesus we receive you in this moment,  
giving you thanks and praise that you make yourself present  
to all your people in the bread and wine of the Eucharist.  
Transform our hearts that we may shine as your light in dark places;  
*Where there is hatred, let us sow love;*  
*Where there is injury, pardon;*  
*Where there is doubt, faith;*  
*Where there is despair, hope;*  
*Where there is darkness, light;*  
*Where there is sadness, joy.*  
And this all, in love for you. Amen.

*Or*

**One:** O Loving God, in union with Christian people throughout the world  
and across the centuries gathered to make Eucharist, hearing your holy Word  
and receiving the Precious Body and Blood of your dear Son,  
I offer you praise and thanksgiving.

Even while separated from tasting the Bread of Heaven and drinking the Cup of Life,  
I pray that you will unite me with all the baptised  
and with your Son who gave his life for us.  
Come Lord Jesus, dwell in me and send your Holy Spirit  
that I may be filled with your presence.

Jesus, as the hem of your garment, touched in faith,  
healed the woman who could not touch your body,  
so may the soul of your servant be healed,  
for though I cannot receive you in the sacrament I can,  
through this offering of my prayer, receive you in my heart;  
grant this for Christ's sake. Amen.<sup>3</sup>

*Prayers recommended for use by children:*

**One:** Holy Jesus, thank you for loving us,  
and thank you for the holy bread and wine that reminds us that you are always with us.  
Come and live in our hearts, so we may know your love, and love others too. Amen.

*Or*

**One:** Jesus, you remind us in bread and wine that you are near to us.  
Bring me nearer to you every day, and let me carry you in my heart,  
to share your love with the world you made. Amen.

*Or*

**One:** Lord Jesus, thank you that you are always with me,  
I pray that you would remind me to welcome you to share every day with me.  
Thank you for loving me. I want to say that I love you too. Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from a service of Spiritual Communion, Diocese of Chelmsford, Church of England

Or

**One: Jesus, I want to follow you:  
to see you more clearly;  
love you more dearly;  
and follow you more nearly.  
So come into my heart,  
so that we may share life together. Amen.**

*After a time of prayer, we sing together....*

**COMMUNION HYMN** Before I take the Body of my Lord, (Common Praise #610)

1. Before I take the body of my Lord,  
before I share his life in bread and wine,  
I recognise the sorry things within:  
these I lay down.
2. The words of hope I often failed to give,  
the prayers of kindness buried by my pride,  
The signs of care I argued out of sight:  
these I lay down.
3. The narrowness of vision and of mind,  
the need for other folk to serve my will,  
and every word and silence meant to hurt:  
these I lay down.
4. Of those around in whom I meet my Lord,  
I ask their pardon and I grant them mine  
that every contradiction of Christ's peace  
might be laid down.
5. Lord Jesus Christ, companion at this feast,  
I empty now my heart and stretch my hands  
and ask to meet you here in bread and wine  
which you lay down.

### **Prayer After Communion**

Bishop: Let us pray...

Father of all,

**All: we give you thanks and praise,  
that when we were still far off,  
you met us in your Son and brought us home.  
Dying and living, he declared you love,  
gave us grace and opened the gate of glory.  
May we who receive Christ's presence,  
live his risen life and bring life to others,  
and may we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.  
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,  
so we and all your children shall be free,  
and the whole earth live to praise your name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.<sup>4</sup>**

### **The Blessing**

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<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Common Worship, Church of England, Holy Communion Order One.

**CLOSING HYMN** We Lay Our Broken World In Sorrow At Your Feet (Common Praise #613)

1. We lay our broken world  
in sorrow at your feet,  
haunted by hunger, war, and fear;  
oppressed by power & hate,
2. Where human life seems less  
than profit, might, & pride  
though to unite us all in you;  
you lived, & loved, & died.
3. We bring our broken hopes,  
for lives of dignity;  
workless and overworked  
you love and call us to be free.
4. We bring our broken loves,  
friends parted, families torn;  
then in your life and death we see,  
that love must be reborn.
5. We bring our broken selves,  
confused and closed & tired;  
then through your gift of healing grace  
new purpose is inspired.
6. Come fill us, Fire of God,  
our life and strength renew;  
find in us love and hope and trust,  
and lift us up to you.

**The Dismissal**

One: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude:** My Heart sees redemption at hand" Op. 122 No. 4 J. Brahms