

# Ash Wednesday

Epiphany Lutheran Church

2-17-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Vicar Karen Pugatch

## Invocation

When we worship we acknowledge our relationship with God, our understanding of what He has done for us in Christ, and what he has called us to be in His Spirit. When we worship we acknowledge that we are a member of the Body of Christ.

## Hymn of Preparation: [“Just As I Am”](#)

### The Psalm 116:1-8

I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication,  
Because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.

The cords entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me;  
I came to grief and sorrow.

Then I called upon the name of the Lord; “O Lord, I pray you, save my life.”

Gracious is the Lord and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

The Lord watches over the innocent; I was brought very low, and he helped me.

Turn again to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has treated you well.

For you have rescued my life from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.: I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

## Hymn [“In the Cross of Christ I Glory”](#)

## The Scripture Lessons

The Lesson: [Genesis 11:27- 12:9](#)

The Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 and Message ([Video](#)) Vicar Karen Pugatch

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“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.

<sup>2</sup>“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. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“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. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>“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. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>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.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

## **The Message**

Come on in the door is open!

How I long to call out those words from my kitchen, welcoming friends into my home. I am sure that many of you miss gathering with friends and family, hugs and handshakes, civil discourse- just a few of the many things this past year of pandemic and politics has stolen from us.

Today is Ash Wednesday, the day we Christians mark as the first day of the season of Lent, the day that many Christians mark their foreheads with an ashen cross recalling again our own mortality. This year doesn't it seem that we have already been living in Lent? Again, and again the news tells of the overwhelming cost of the pandemic on our country- so much loss, so much death, so much we cannot do-it's like Lent has never left.

Yet again this year, as in many years past, we gather to hear the invitation to the Spiritual practices of Lent. Again, and again we are invited into the disciplines of Lent- Almsgiving, works of love, Fasting, repentance and Prayer. Again, and again, we are invited into the holy space that God opens for us- not a building but a way of being- a space where we are called to repentance- a space for starting over, for resetting our own priorities, a space where, despite the uncertainty and death all around us, we are called to reclaim what is right .

Again-and-again we are invited into the practices of Lent. Almsgiving, and works of love- something we have been able to continue in this pandemic time. This year why not spend some time reflecting on why we practice generosity to those who have unmet needs. Rediscover the theological underpinnings of this practice and learn to articulate that this practice is founded in the abundant love of God- a love that we are called to share with our neighbors. Let us also engage in the practices that address the underlying causes that create such need in our country.

Again, and again we are invited into the practice of repentance and fasting. Repentance - changing our hearts and lives, a turning away from those things that separate us from God and our neighbor. How would our lives be enriched if instead of fasting from cookies, cake, steak and alcohol Christians instead fasted from white supremacy and privilege, greed, Christian

nationalism, finger-pointing, name-calling and the divisive rhetoric that has been front and center in the dialogue of this past season.

Again, and again we are invited in, to prayer-to conversation with our loving creator. Again, and again we cry out with the psalmist-How long, help us.... Again, and again we say thank you for the blessings we have received; again, and again we look to God our help in ages past and our hope. Again, and again God hears and answers our prayers. Again, and again, we are invited to pray the prayer we have been taught -a prayer that does not use singular language, does not focus on self, rather the prayer that addresses Our Father – a corporate prayer, prayed in community, for the community because again, and again it is to that community that Spirit comes breathing an answer to our petitions.

This year it seems so different doesn't it? So ,what if this year we don't focus on the past and all that we have lost or let the present reality cage us in or crush us-this year as once again we are invited to engage in the practices of Lent let us look with hope toward the future-setting our sights on the resurrection, preparing our hearts, minds and bodies. Because again, and again we are invited to go out into the world to be the hands, feet, heart and voice of God .

Again, and again we are invited in-to the practices of lent  
Again, and again we are invited into the Love of God  
Again, and again we are invited to share that love  
As Jan Richardson writes:

So, let us be marked  
Not for sorrow.  
And let us be marked  
Not for shame.  
Let us be marked  
Not for false humility or for thinking  
we are less  
than we are

but for claiming  
what God can do  
within the dust,  
within the dirt,  
within the stuff  
of which the world

is made  
and the stars that blaze  
in our bones  
and the galaxies that spiral

inside the smudge  
we bear.

From "Blessing the Dust" Jan Richardson

### **The Covenant**

The Lord bless you.  
And give you peace.  
Thanks be to God who sent us forth.  
He gathers his people again.  
: Holy is the God of Abraham.  
And of all generations to come.  
The Lord has signed and pledged a covenant,  
And He will not change His mind. In His name we were baptized to be one people in Christ. In the water and the Word He led us to renounce evil. From every race and nation he called and named us His own. We confess His holy name in our doubt and in our faith.

**The Offering: Tithe-ly** ([On-Line Giving Link](#))

### **The Prayer**

Our loving heavenly Father, we now enter the season of Lent during which we desire to increase our faith and understanding of our relationship with you. Help us to overcome the temptation to overlook our shortcomings so that we may honestly determine who we are in relation to who we need to be as a follower of your message of love and forgiveness. Open our minds and lives to the reality of who we are and who we need to be during this time of polarization and turmoil. Continue to be with those who are suffering from the pandemic and give us the will to help stop the spread of this deadly virus. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer** [Charlotte Church](#)

**Hymn:** "[Beneath the Cross of Jesus](#)"

### **Sign of the Cross**

Live on with the sign of the cross sealed within our hearts, "Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return. Repent and believe in the gospel."