

Ash Wednesday February 17, 2021  
St. Francis' Episcopal Church

Welcome

Gathering Song

Bless the Lord My Soul

WLP 825

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "Bless the Lord my soul and bless God's ho - ly name." and "Bless the Lord my soul, Who leads me in - to life." The piano accompaniment features chords and moving lines in both hands, with a fermata over the final chord of each system.

**Ritual Greeting and Sign of the Cross**

Officiant: Blessed be Christ Jesus,  
Who bore our sins in his body on the cross,  
That we might be encouraged to die in to sin and live in right relationship.  
We bless ourselves in the name of the Father+

All: **...and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**

**Introduction**

Officiant: We gather today to celebrate God's abundant mercy.  
We come, admitting that we are constantly in need of mercy and forgiveness.  
Today we will express this by being signed with the Cross of Jesus Christ in ashes on our foreheads...and so declare to the rest of the world our willingness to change and turn again toward the Gospel values that Jesus taught.

Let us pray for the grace to keep Lent faithfully...

**Opening Prayer**

Officiant: Spirit of God, who led Jesus into the desert to fast and pray,  
Lead us as we enter this time of Lent.  
Give us courage to scrutinize our hearts with honesty;

Give us strength to deal with what we find;  
Give us love to forgive ourselves and each other,  
So that, in peace and joy, we may celebrate at Easter  
The death and resurrection of Jesus  
And all that it means for each of us.  
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

### **We Listen**

Reader 1: From the prophet Joel: 2:13  
Return to the Lord, your God,  
for God is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,  
and relents from punishing.

*Pause*

Reader 2: From Paul to the Church in Corinth: 2 5:21-21  
We are ambassadors for Christ,  
as though God were making the appeal directly through us.  
Therefore we implore you in Christ's name: be reconciled to God.

*Pause*

Reader 3: From the gospel of Matthew 6:2-4  
When you do acts of kindness, don't have it trumpeted before you; that is what hypocrites do in the synagogues and the streets, that they may be praised by others. The truth is, they've already received their reward in full. But when you do acts of kindness, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing; your good deeds must be done in secret, and your God—who sees all that is done in secret—will repay you.

*Pause*

### **We Reflect**

*Homily by officiant*

### **We Respond**

Officiant: Siblings in Christ,  
As we receive the ashes on our foreheads,  
we affirm that in the life-cycle,  
we are continually *dying* to the old ways and *rising* to newness.  
Though change is sometimes difficult,  
our faith helps us to break through what seems like disaster—to live with new life.  
May we all find that new life as we journey to Easter!

As we place ashes on our heads  
let it be a sign of our repentance  
and our willingness to change our lives for the better.

*Pause for silent prayer*

## Distribution of Ashes

*Dip your thumb in the ashes mailed to your home to make the sign of the cross on your own forehead. If you do not have ashes available, simply use your clean thumb.*

Officiant: Out of the ashes of your life, you will rise.  
Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.  
Let us silently sign each person we see on screen and as we do, let us hold them in prayer, asking for courage and strength as they enter the journey of transformation this Lent.  
Together we make the sign of the cross on our foreheads and we say, "I remember that I am dust, and to dust I will return."

*Psalm 51 plays as we sign each person on screen.*

## The Lord's Prayer

Officiant: We pray now in the words that Jesus taught us...  
All: **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.**

## Sign of Peace

Officiant: Let us offer each other a sign of peace.  
*Share a sign of peace with those in your household and/or to those outside your home in the chat or by text.*

## Closing Prayer

Officiant: Let us pray...

*Pause for silent prayer.*

May your healing love turn us from sin  
and keep us on the way that leads to you.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.  
All: **Amen.**


## We Go Forth

### Blessing

Officiant: May the God who loves us so generously keep us from all harm and bless us with every good gift.  
All: **Amen.**

Officiant: May God's Word be in our hearts and fill us with lasting joy.  
All: **Amen.**

Officiant: May we walk in God's ways, always knowing what is right and good.  
All: **Amen.**  
May almighty God bless us + the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
All: **Amen.**



1 Lord Je - sus, Sun of Right - eous - ness, shine  
 2 Give guid - ance to our wan - dering ways, for -  
 3 Lord, grant that we in pen - i - tence may  
 4 Now near - er draws the day of days when  
 5 The u - ni - verse your glo - ry shows, blest



1 in our hearts, we pray; dis - pel the gloom that  
 2 give us, Lord, our sin; re - store us by your  
 3 of - fer you our praise, and through your sav - ing  
 4 par - a - dise shall bloom, when we shall be at  
 5 Fa - ther, Spi - rit, Son; we shall ac - claim your



1 shades our minds and be to us as day.  
 2 lov - ing care to peace and joy with - in.  
 3 sac - ri - fice re - ceive your gift of grace.  
 4 one with you, Lord, ris - en from the tomb.  
 5 ma - jes - ty, e - ter - nal Three in One.

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**Dismissal**

Leader: Nourished by God's Word, go in peace to love and serve.  
 All: **Thanks be to God.**

Service adapted from Brisbane Catholic Education, formation and leadership prayers.  
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