

# St. Gregory's Episcopal Church

## Ash Wednesday

### February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

#### THE ANGELUS

*The Angelus is a traditional Christian devotion offered before Holy Eucharist and Morning and Evening Prayer in honor of the Incarnation. It is usually accompanied by the ringing of the church bell (in three sets of three for each versicle, response, and Hail Mary, followed by one set of nine for the concluding prayer). You may pray it as the bell rings, or use the silence to prepare for worship in your own way.*

*The first three bells*



*V. The angel of the Lord announced unto Mary,  
R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.*

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God  
pray for us sinners, now,  
and at the hour of our death.

*The second three bells*

*V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.  
R. Be it unto me according to your word.*

Hail Mary, full of grace...

*The third three bells*

*V. And the Word was made flesh.  
R. And dwelled among us.*

Hail Mary, full of grace...

*The nine bells*



*V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,  
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord, that we who have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ, announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary, may by his cross and passion be brought to the glory of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

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.

## THE FIRST READING.....*Joel 2:1-2,12-17*

A Reading from the Book of Joel.

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! 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?’”

*Reader* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

## THE RESPONSE (*chanted in unison*) .....*Psalm 103:8-14*

8 O Lord, you are full of compassion and | **mercy**, \*  
slow to anger and of great | **kindness**.

9 You will not always ac|**cuse us**, \*  
nor will you keep your anger for | **ever**.

10 You have 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 your mercy great upon those who | **fear you**.

12 As far as the east is from the | **west**, \*  
so far have you removed our | **sins from us**.

13 As a parent cares for their | **children**, \*  
so do you care for those who | **fear you**.

14 For you know whereof we are | **made**; \*  
you remember that we are but | **dust**.

**THE EPISTLE.....**.....*2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10*

A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

*Reader*                   Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.  
*People*                   **Thanks be to God.**

**THE GOSPEL.....**.....*Matthew 6:1-6,16-21*

*Celebrant*           The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.  
*People*                   **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.  
*People*                   **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**THE SERMON.....**.....The Rev. Matthew Wright

#### **THE INVITATION TO A HOLY LENT**

*After the Sermon, the Celebrant invites the people to the observance of a holy Lent, saying*

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now present ourselves in silence before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

*Silence is then kept for a time. Ashes are then imposed, with the words:*

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

*If you are unable to physically receive the ashes, you may make the Sign of the Cross on your own forehead, remembering your mortality.*

*All then join in saying*

**Psalm 51** *Miserere mei, Deus*

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; \* in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- 2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness \* and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions, \* and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against you only have I sinned \* and done what is evil in your sight.
- 5 And so you are justified when you speak \* and upright in your judgment
- 6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, \* a sinner from my mother's womb.
- 7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, \* and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
- 8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; \* wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
- 9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, \* that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- 10 Hide your face from my sins \* and blot out all my iniquities.
- 11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, \* and renew a right spirit within me.
- 12 Cast me not away from your presence \* and take not your holy Spirit from me.
- 13 Give me the joy of your saving help again \* and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
- 14 I shall teach your ways to the wicked, \* and sinners shall return to you.
- 15 Deliver me from death, O God, \* and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

- 16 Open my lips, O Lord, \*  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- 17 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice; \*  
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; \*  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

### **Litany of Penitence**

*The Celebrant and People say together*

**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.**

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.**

*The Priest says*

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 God's ministers to declare and pronounce to God's people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. God pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe the holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech God to grant us true repentance and the Holy Spirit, that those things may please God 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 God's eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## THE PEACE

*Celebrant*      The peace of Christ be always with you.

*People*            **And also with you.**

*The people greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.*

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING – Eucharistic Prayer C

*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 God thanks and praise.**

God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise.  
**Glory to you for ever and ever.**

At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.  
**By your will they were created and have their being.**

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.  
**Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.**

Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.  
**By his blood, he reconciled us. By his wounds, we are healed.**

And therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn:

**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 Celebrant continues the Eucharistic Prayer.*

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 for ever. **AMEN.**

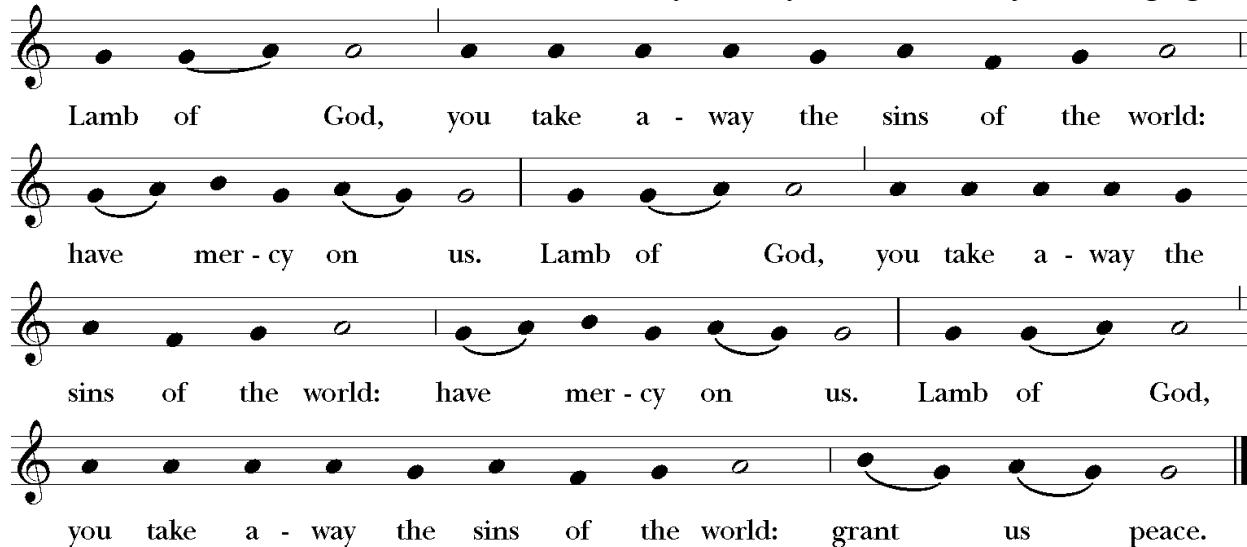
And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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

*The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A brief silence follows. All then join in singing*



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world:  
have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sins of the world: have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,  
you take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

*If you are unable to physically participate in Communion, you may offer a Prayer of Spiritual Communion during this time.*

### A PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

In union, O Lord, with the faithful at every altar of your Church where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving. I present to you my soul and body with the earnest wish that I may always be united to you, and, since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I beseech you to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself with you, and embrace you with all the love of my soul. Let nothing ever separate you from me. May I live in you, and may you live in me, both in this life and in the life to come. Amen.

### POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Almighty and everliving God,  
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food  
of the most precious Body and Blood  
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;

and for assuring us in these holy mysteries  
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,  
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.

And now, Father, send us out  
to do the work you have given us to do,  
to love and serve you  
as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.  
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

## THE BLESSING

## THE DISMISSAL

*Celebrant*      Let us bless the Lord.  
*People*        **Thanks be to God.**