

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Chester, Vermont
The Ash Wednesday Liturgy with Holy Eucharist
February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. We gather to begin our Lenten fast of 40 days. Sundays are not counted as part of those forty days. The term fast refers not specifically to food, but rather to any activity or busyness of mind and heart setting up a barrier to our realization of God's spirit working in us. Thus it includes not simply what we "give up for Lent," but rather what we take on and open ourselves to, opening ourselves to see ourselves, both as individuals and as a community, growing spiritually as Illuminators.

The ashes offered are signs of our mortality and thus of our giving up of the barriers, our control impulses we erect to protect the fortress-like fences defending our identity, and its self-importance. Those who wish the ashes will be invited forward for their imposition.

The clergy enter in silence and then begin the service with the Collect for Ash Wednesday.

Presider Let us pray.

Presider and people 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 Reading Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Reader A Reading from the book of the prophet Joel.

¹Blow 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—
²a 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.

¹²Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³rend 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.

¹⁴Who 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?

¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶gather 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.

¹⁷Between 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 br to God.

Psalm 103

1 Bless the Holy One, O my soul, * and all that is within me, bless God's holy Name.

2 Bless the Holy One, O my soul, * and forget not all the gifts of God.

3 O God, you forgive all our sins * and you heal all our infirmities;

4 You redeem our life from the grave * and crown us with mercy and loving-kindness;

5 You satisfy us with good things, * and our youth is renewed like an eagle's.

6 O God, you execute righteousness * and judgment for all who are oppressed.

7 You made your ways known to Moses * and your works to the children of Israel.

8 You are full of compassion and mercy, * slow to anger and of great kindness.

9 You will not always accuse 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 a child, * so do you care for those who fear you.

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

15 Our days are like the grass; * we flourish like a flower of the field;

16 When the wind goes over it, it is gone, * and its place shall know it no more.

17 But your merciful goodness endures for ever on those who fear you, *
and your righteousness on children's children;

18 On those who keep your covenant * and remember your commandments
and do them.

19 You have set your throne in heaven, * and you have dominion over all.

20 Bless God, all you angels, you mighty ones who do God's bidding, * and
hearken to the voice of God's word.

21 Sing praise, all you heavenly hosts, * you ministers who do God's will.

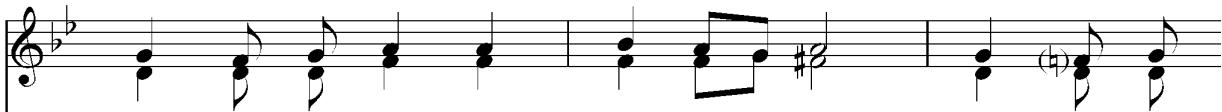
22 Bless God, all creation, in all places of God's dominion; * bless the Holy
One, O my soul.

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

Reader A Reading from Paul's Second letter to the Church
in Corinth.

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.

Sequence Hymn 152 *The Hymnal 1982*



1 Kind Ma - ker of the world, O hear the fer - vent
2 Each heart is man - i - fest to thee; thou know - est
3 Spare us, O Lord, who now con - fess our sins and
4 Give us the dis - ci - pline that springs from ab - sti -
5 Grant, O thou bless - ed Trin - i - ty; grant, O un -



1 prayer, with man - y a tear poured forth by all the
2 our in - fir - mi - ty; now we re - pent, and
3 all our wick - ed - ness, and, for the glo - ry
4 nence in out - ward things with in - ward fast - ing,
5 chang - ing Un - i - ty; that this our fast of



1 pen - i - tent who keep this ho - ly fast of Lent!
2 seek thy face; grant un - to us thy par - doning grace.
3 of thy Name, our weak-en ed souls to health re - claim.
4 so that we in heart and soul may dwell with thee.
5 for - ty days may work our pro - fit and thy praise!

The Holy Gospel Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Reader 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 Sermon Rev. Bruce L. MacDuffie

After the Sermon, all stand, and the Presider or Minister appointed 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 kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is then kept for a time, all kneeling

Blessing of the ashes

Celebrant Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Imposition of the ashes

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

Psalm 51 recited by all

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 God, * 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.

The Litany of Penitence

The Presider and People together, all seated.

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.

Presider and others read the petitions

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.

People 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.

People Have mercy on us, Lord.

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

People We confess to you, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

People We confess to you, Lord.

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

People We confess to you, Lord.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

People We confess to you, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

People 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,

People 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,

People Accept our repentance, Lord.

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

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;
People Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,
People That we may show forth your glory in the world.

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

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People And also with you.

Offertory Hymn 411 *The Hymnal 1982*

1 O bless the Lord, my soul! His grace to thee pro - claim!
 2 O bless the Lord, my soul! His mer - cies bear in mind!
 3 He will not al - ways chide; he will with pa - tience wait;
 4 He par - dons all thy sins, pro - longs thy fee - ble breath;
 5 He clothes thee with his love, up - holds thee with his truth;

1 And all that is with - in me join to bless his ho - ly Name!
 2 For - get not all his ben - e - fits! The Lord to thee is kind.
 3 his wrath is ev - er slow to rise and rea - dy to a - bate.
 4 he heal - eth thine in - fir - mi - ties and ran - soms thee from death.
 5 and like the ea - gle he re - news the vi - gor of thy youth.

6 Then bless his holy Name,
 whose grace hath made thee whole,
 whose loving-kindness crowns thy days:
 O bless the Lord, my soul!

Eucharistic Prayer

Presider God be with you.
People And also with you.
Presider Lift up your hearts.
People We lift them to the Lord.
Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People It is right to give our thanks and praise.
Presider It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth.
Presider You bid your faithful people cleanse their hearts, and prepare with joy for the Paschal feast; that fervent in prayer and in works of mercy, and renewed by your Word and Sacraments, they may come to the fullness of grace which you have prepared for those

who love you. 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:

The Sanctus 133 *Enriching our Music 2*

Cantor



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,

All



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,

heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - - - - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

The people stand or kneel.

Celebrant Holy and gracious God: 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 maker 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:

Celebrant and People

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Celebrant We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, Almighty God, 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 Christ. 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 Jesus Christ our Savior. By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say
People and Presider 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread and Invitation to communion

Presider Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People Therefore let us keep the feast.

S-164 *The Hymnal 1982 Service Music*

Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world:
give us your peace, give us your peace.

The Communion

This is the table, not of the Church but of Jesus Christ. It is made ready for those who love God and who want to love God more. So come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been for a long time or ever before, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. It is Christ who invites you to

be known and fed here. **All are welcome to receive communion.** Gluten-free bread is available. Inform the priest if you prefer this option. The communion wine contains alcohol. If you prefer a blessing, cross your arms across your chest.

Communion Hymn 574 *The Hymnal 1982*

1. Be - fore thy throne, O God, we kneel: give us a con - science.
2. Search out our hearts and make us true; help us to give to.
3. For sins of heed - less word and deed, for pride am - bi - tious.
4. Let the fierce fires which burn and try, our in - most spi - rit.

quick to feel, a rea - dy mind to un - der - stand the
all their due. From love of plea - sure, lust of gold, from
to suc - ceed, for craft - y trade and sub - tle snare to
pu - ri - fy: con - sume the ill; purge out the shame; O

mean - ing of thy chas - tening hand; what - e'er the pain and
sins which make the heart grow cold, wean us and train us
catch the sim - ple un - a - ware, for lives be - reft of
God, be with us in the flame; a new - born peo - ple

shame may be, bring us, O Fa - ther, near - er thee.
with thy rod; teach us to know our faults, O God.
pur - pose high, for - give, for - give, O Lord, we cry.
may we rise, more pure, more true, more no - bly wise.

Post-Communion Prayer

Presider Let us Pray

Presider and people

God of abundance, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation; you have united us with Christ and one another; and you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love

to the world and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior.
Amen.

Closing Hymn 149 *The Hymnal 1982*

Unison or harmony

1 E - ter - nal Lord of love, be - hold your Church
2 So dai - ly dy - ing to the way of self,
3 If dead in you, so in you we a - rise,
walk - ing once more the pil - grim way of Lent,
so dai - ly liv - ing to your way of love,
you the first - born of all the faith - ful dead;
led by your cloud by day, by night your fire,
we walk the road, Lord Je - sus, that you trod,
and as through ston - y ground the green shoots break,
moved by your love and toward your pres - ence bent:
know - ing our - selves bap - tized in - to your death:
glo - rious in spring - time dress of leaf and flower,
far off yet here - the goal of all de - sire.
so we are dead and live with you in God.
so in the Fa - ther's glo - ry shall we wake.

The Blessing on Ash Wednesday

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 Savior. Amen.

Dismissal

Presider Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

Wednesdays at St. Luke's

Every Wednesday during Lent (and beyond) the Eucharist will be celebrated at St. Luke's at 5:30 PM, a service lasting about thirty minutes. The service will be celebrated in Willard Hall until warmer weather.

PLEASE!! Take this service leaflet with you. Read the scriptures again. Learn a hymn or two. Use the prayers of the people all this coming week. Blessings!

Scripture readings for next Sunday, the First Sunday in Lent, February 22, 2026.

Prepare to more fully participate in celebrating the Eucharist next Sunday. Read the scripture lessons this week. Pray them. Talk about them with others parishioners or anyone. And thus be open to the Spirit as we worship together next Sunday.

First reading: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7.

Psalm: Psalm 32

Second reading: Romans 5:12-19

Gospel Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday February 22 The First Sunday in Lent

The Great Litany and Holy Eucharist 10-11:15 AM

Wednesday, February 25 Holy Eucharist 5:30-6:00 P.M.

Commemorating Emily Malbone Morgan

Sunday, March 1 The Second Sunday in Lent

Holy Eucharist 10-11:15 AM

Wednesday, March 4 Midweek Eucharist 5:30-6:00 P.M.

Commemorating John and Charles Wesley

Sunday, March 8 The Third Sunday in Lent 10-11:15 AM

Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, March 11 Midweek Eucharist 5:30-6:00 P.M.

Commemorating Harriet Ross Tubman

Sunday, March 15 Fourth Sunday in Lent – Mothering Sunday also called Refreshment Sunday. A day when Lenten practices such as no flowers for the altar are relaxed for this special day.

Pot luck lunch will follow the service. Delectable simnel cake will be served, as is tradition on this day.

OTHER EVENTS

February 25 Vestry Meeting 6:30-8PM

St. Luke's Reading group beginning after Coffee on Sunday, Feb. 22 will engage with a slow read and open discussion of *Do Not Judge Anyone: Desert Wisdom for a Polarized World*, by Isaac Slater. Slated is easy to read and dances us through scripture passages with great eye and mind opening skill. Once reviewer says: "Never have we needed this vision of inclusive love more than we do today." Let Bruce know if you would like a copy of this book.

March 5 Memory Café 11 AM until 1pm for those with memory issues such as dementia and Alzheimer's, and their care givers. Free of charge and light lunch served. Good musician for the client table.

March 9 – During coffee hour, short special parish meeting to elect Vestry members. Hopefully this will conclude actions we were not able to complete at the February 2 annual meeting.

March 19 Vestry Meeting 6:30-8PM

March 30 POT LUCK LUNCH AFTER SERVICE FOLLOWED BY READYING CHURCH FOR PASSION SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK. SIMNEL CAKE DESSERT AFTER CLEAN UP. Share being in community at the pot luck and dessert time, and if able in the clean up in the church sanctuary. I'll bring a spare vacuum from home.