

**Ash Wednesday**  
**February 18, 2026**  
**St. James Episcopal Church, Woodstock, Vermont**  
**12:00 noon and 7:00 pm**

Prelude: *Erhalt uns, Herr* - J. S. Bach

**7:00 pm: Hymn 143 The Glory of These Forty Days**

*Erhalt uns, Herr*

1. The glory of these forty days  
we celebrate with songs of praise;  
for Christ, through whom all things were made,  
himself has fasted and has prayed.
2. Alone and fasting Moses saw  
the loving God who gave the law;  
and to Elijah, fasting, came  
the steeds and chariots of flame.
3. So Daniel trained his mystic sight,  
delivered from the lions' might;  
and John, the Bridegroom's friend, became  
the herald of Messiah's name.
4. Then grant us, Lord, like them to be  
full oft in fast and prayer with thee;  
our spirits strengthen with thy grace,  
and give us joy to see thy face.
5. O Father, Son, and Spirit blest,  
to thee be every prayer addressed,  
who art in threefold Name adored,  
from age to age, the only Lord.

***This service begins on page 264 in the Prayer Book.***

*Celebrant:* Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

***People:* God's mercy endures for ever.**

*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.*

**Old Testament Lesson: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

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?'"

### **Psalm 103:8-14**

- 8 The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, \*  
slow to anger and of great kindness.
- 9 He will not always accuse us, \*  
nor will he keep his anger for ever.
- 10 He has 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 his mercy great upon those who fear him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west, \*  
so far has he removed our sins from us.
- 13 As a father cares for his children, \*  
so does the LORD care for those who fear him.
- 14 For he himself knows whereof we are made; \*  
he remembers that we are but dust.

### **New Testament Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10**

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.

**7:00 pm: Sequence Hymn 142 Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days -  
- St. Flavian**

1. Lord, who throughout these forty days  
for us didst fast and pray,  
teach us with thee to mourn our sins,  
and close by thee to stay.

2. As thou with Satan didst contend  
and didst the victory win,  
O give us strength in thee to fight,  
in thee to conquer sin.

3. As thou didst hunger bear and thirst,  
so teach us, gracious Lord  
to die to self, and chiefly live  
by thy most holy word.

4. And through these days of penitence,  
and through thy Passiontide,  
yea, evermore, in life and death,  
Jesus! with us abide.

5. Abide with us, that so, this life  
of suffering overpast,  
an Easter of unending joy  
we may attain at last!

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

*Then, all standing, the Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel, first saying*

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. Amy Spagna**

*After the Sermon, all stand, and the Celebrant 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.*

*If ashes are to be imposed, the Celebrant says the following prayer*

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.*

*The ashes are imposed with the following words*

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

*The following Psalm is then sung or said*

**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**

**BCP, page 267**

*The Celebrant and People together, all kneeling*

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.***

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 Bishop, if present, or the Priest, stands and, facing the people, 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 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 is then exchanged.*

### **The Holy Eucharist**

**7:00 pm only: Offertory Hymn 674 “Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive”** *Detroit*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. “Forgive our sins as we forgive”<br>you taught us, Lord, to pray;<br>but you alone can grant us grace<br>to live the words we say. | 3. In blazing light your cross reveals<br>the truth we dimly knew,<br>how small the debts men owe to us,<br>how great our debt to you.                 |
| 2. How can your pardon reach and bless<br>the unforgiving heart<br>that broods on wrongs and will not let<br>old bitterness depart?   | 4. Lord, cleanse the depths within our<br>souls,<br>and bid resentment cease;<br>then, reconciled to God and man,<br>our lives will spread your peace. |

### **The Great Thanksgiving: Eucharistic Prayer A (BCP, page 361)**

*The people remain standing. The Celebrant, whether bishop or priest, faces them and sings or says*

<b>People</b>	The Lord be with you.
<b>Celebrant</b>	<b>And also with you.</b>
<b>People</b>	Lift up your hearts.
<b>Celebrant</b>	<b>We lift them to the Lord.</b>
<b>People</b>	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
<b>People</b>	<b>It is right to give him thanks and praise.</b>

*Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who was tempted in every way as we are, yet did not sin. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to live no longer for ourselves alone, but for him who died for us and rose again.

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:

*Celebrant and People*

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 people stand or kneel.*

*Then the Celebrant continues*

Holy and gracious Father: 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 Father 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.

*At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.*

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.**

*The Celebrant continues*

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, 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 him. 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 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,

*People and Celebrant*

**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 period of silence is kept.*

*Then may be sung or said*

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;  
***Therefore let us keep the feast.***

*Facing the people, the Celebrant says the following Invitation*

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

*and may add*           Take them in remembrance that Christ died for  
you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith,  
with thanksgiving.

*Those unable to receive communion in person today are invited to say the following  
Prayer of Spiritual Communion.*

*In union, blessed Jesus, with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church where  
your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day, and remembering particularly my own  
parish and those worshiping there, I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving, for  
creation and all the blessings of this life, for the redemption won for us by your life,  
death, and resurrection, for the means of grace and the hope of glory.*

*And particularly for the blessings given me.... I believe that you are truly present in the  
Holy Sacrament, and, since I cannot at this time receive communion, I pray you to come  
into my heart. I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart, my soul, and  
my mind. Let nothing separate me from you; let me serve you in this life until, by your  
grace, I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace. Amen.*

**Postcommunion Prayer**

**BCP, page 366**

*Celebrant and People*

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.

*Prayer over the People and Dismissal*

*Celebrant:* Bow down before the Lord.

*Silence is kept.*

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 Lord.  
*Amen.*

**7:00 pm only: Hymn 411 O Bless the Lord, My Soul!      *St. Thomas (Williams)***

1 O bless the Lord, my soul!  
His grace to thee proclaim!  
And all that is within me join  
to bless his holy Name!

4 He pardons all thy sins,  
prolongs thy feeble breath;  
he healeth thine infirmities  
and ransoms thee from death.

2 O bless the Lord, my soul!  
His mercies bear in mind!  
Forget not all his benefits!  
The Lord to thee is kind.

5 He clothes thee with his love,  
upholds thee with his truth;  
and like the eagle he renews  
the vigor of thy youth.

3 He will not always chide;  
he will with patience wait;  
his wrath is ever slow to rise  
and ready to abate.

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

*Celebrant:* Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

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

**7:00 pm only:** Postlude: *A Lamb Bears All Its Guilt Away* - Johann Pachelbel