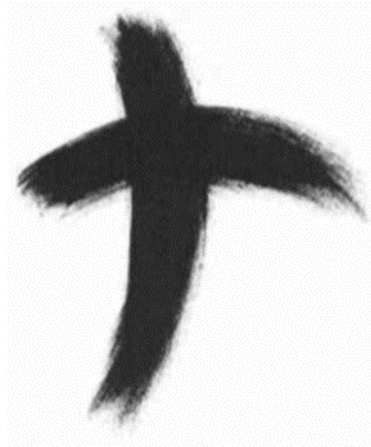


*The Benefice of St Mary the Virgin,
Higham Ferrers with St John the Baptist,
Chelveston-cum-Caldecott*

Lent 2021



Ash Wednesday

17th February 2021

*‘For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.’*



Jesus says to us 'Come to me – follow me' and following Jesus, as those first disciples discovered, means walking the way of Jesus, ultimately of course, the way of the cross.

Lent, has traditionally been a time when people would begin this journey, in preparing for baptism or confirmation – getting ready to be followers of Jesus, throughout life, and into death...and of course beyond...for even if the way of the cross leads to suffering and death, it is, as we know, the only way to true life - the eternal life and the joy of heaven.

Last Lent plunged us into a different kind of journey – one which we are still travelling through, aware of death all around. This year, we begin Lent once again, but now looking with ever more eager longing for the new hope and new life that will surely come.

During this service, if you have ashes to use at home, you may like to make the sign of the cross on your forehead as the traditional sign of penitence, and in recognition of our falling short of our calling to live as God's people bringing light, love and hope to the world.

We pray that, this Lent, we may learn more of God's light, love and hope, as we follow our Lord and coming to know him as the source of all things, are raised, with him, to newness of life.

The Gathering

Music

Come to me – by Heartcry

*Come to me, you weary ones,
come to me, you fearful ones.
Come, all you, with heavy loads
and I will give your soul repose.
Take my yoke, and learn from me,
take my yoke, and you will see;
I love you so tenderly,
and I will give your soul repose.*

*There's no need to struggle, there's no need to fight;
Put your hand in mine and you will be alright;
for my yoke is easy and my burden light,
I will give your soul repose.*

*Come to me, you faded ones,
come to me you jaded ones.
Come, all you, with broken dreams
and bathe in love's pure healing streams.
Take my yoke and learn from me,
take my yoke and you will see
I love you so tenderly,
and I will give your soul repose.*

*There's no need to worry, there's no need to fear,
I will never leave you, no, I'm always here;
how could I forsake the one I love so dear?
I will give your soul repose.*

Call to Worship - Michelle

○ Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall declare your praise
○ Lord, open our eyes
that we may behold your presence
○ Lord, open our ears
that we may hear your call
○ Lord, open our hearts
that we may respond to your love
○ Lord, open our lives
that we may rejoice in your creation

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we gather once again in a different way, as we now begin this journey through Lent, following the way of faith that Christians have held to since the earliest days, and recalling the time of our Lord's suffering and betrayal to death for love of us. In these challenging times, we do well to repent of all that causes suffering and betrayal in the world, and to look to our own lives, holding fast to God's promises and love to us in Jesus Christ. We come to him, the Lamb of God, in whom we find all that we need.

Hymn

**Just as I am, without one plea
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve:
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, thy love unknown
has broken every barrier down;
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, of that free love
the breadth, length, depth, and
height to prove,
here for a season, then above,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

Words: Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871)

Music: SAFFRON WALDEN Arthur Henry Brown (1830-1926)

The Collect - Brenda

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.



Holy God,
our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin
and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Liturgy of the Word

The Gospel – read by Linda

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to the disciples, 'Beware of practising 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.'

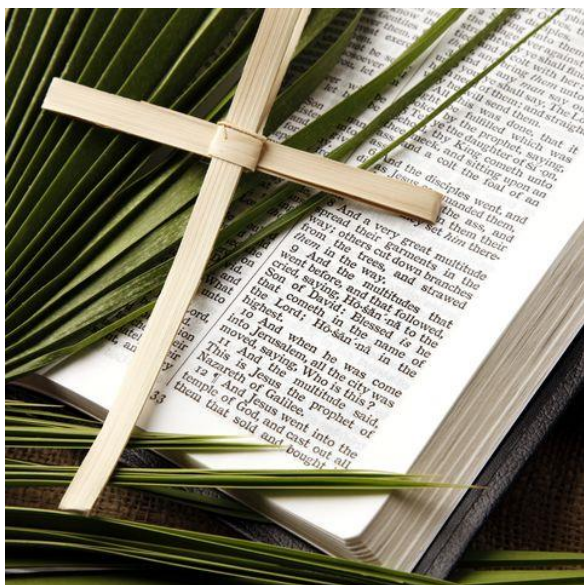
And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily - Brenda



The Liturgy of Penitence

Confession -Paul

Let us now call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God.

God the Father,
have mercy on us.
God the Son,
have mercy on us.
God the Holy Spirit,
have mercy on us.
Trinity of love,
have mercy on us.

We pray together

**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbour as ourselves.
In your mercy,
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.**



The Imposition of Ashes - Michelle

Dear friends in Christ,
ashes are an ancient sign
of the spirit of penitence
with which we keep this
season of Lent.



God the Father,
you create us from the dust of the earth:
grant that these ashes may be for us
a sign of our penitence
and a symbol of our mortality;
for it is by your grace alone
that we receive eternal life
in Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

We are invited to make the sign of the cross on our foreheads, with ashes if we have them, or simply with our thumb, as we say:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.



Motet - Lord for thy tender mercies sake – Richard Farrant (1525-1580)

*Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake,
lay not our sins to our charge,
but forgive that is past
and give us grace to amend our sinful lives;
to decline from sin and incline to virtue,
that we may walk in a perfect heart
before thee now and evermore.*

Repentance and Absolution – Paul

Merciful Father,
**turn us from sin to faithfulness
and from disobedience to love,
and prepare us to celebrate
the death and resurrection of Christ our Saviour
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.**

The Lord enrich you with his grace,
and nourish you with his blessing;
the Lord defend you in trouble and
keep you from all evil;
the Lord accept your prayers,
and absolve you from your offences,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.
Amen.



Hymn

**Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways;
re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence praise.**

**In simple trust like theirs who heard,
beside the Syrian sea,
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.**

**Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.**

**Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm.**

Words: John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)

Music: REPTON Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918)

The Peace - Linda

Lord, speak to us words of peace
And may we hear
the still small voice of calm,
for by faith, we have peace
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us access to his grace.



The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

Prayer of Thanksgiving – Michelle

Father, we thank you that in these forty days
you lead us into the desert of repentance
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline
we may grow in grace
and learn to be your people once again.
Through fasting, prayer and acts of service
you bring us back to your generous heart.
Through study of your holy word
you open our eyes to your presence in the world
and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.
Give us grace as we journey in faith,
to daily follow in the steps of the most holy life
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Lord Jesus, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.
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, the power,
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn

**Be thou my guardian and my guide,
and hear me when I call;
let not my slippery footsteps slide,
and hold me lest I fall.**

**The world, the flesh, and Satan dwell
around the path I tread;
O save me from the snares of hell,
thou quickener of the dead.**

**And if I tempted am to sin,
and outward things are strong,
do thou, O Lord, keep watch within,
and save my soul from wrong.**

**Still let me ever watch and pray,
and feel that I am frail;
that if the tempter cross my way,
yet he may not prevail.**

Words: Isaac Williams (1802-1865)

Music: Isaac Smith (1734-1805)

The Dismissal Gospel - Lesley

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke
Glory to you, O Lord

Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

Luke 15:4-7

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Responsory - Brenda

This is love, not that we loved God,
but that he loved us and sent his Son.
He is the sacrifice for our sins,
that we might live through him.
If God loves us so much
we ought to love one another.
If we love one another
God lives in us.



Blessing - Michelle

May God the Father,
who does not despise the broken spirit,
give to you a contrite heart.
Amen.

May Christ,
who bore our sins in his body on the tree,
heal you by his wounds.
Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
who leads us into all truth,
speak to you words of pardon and peace.
Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always
Amen.

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