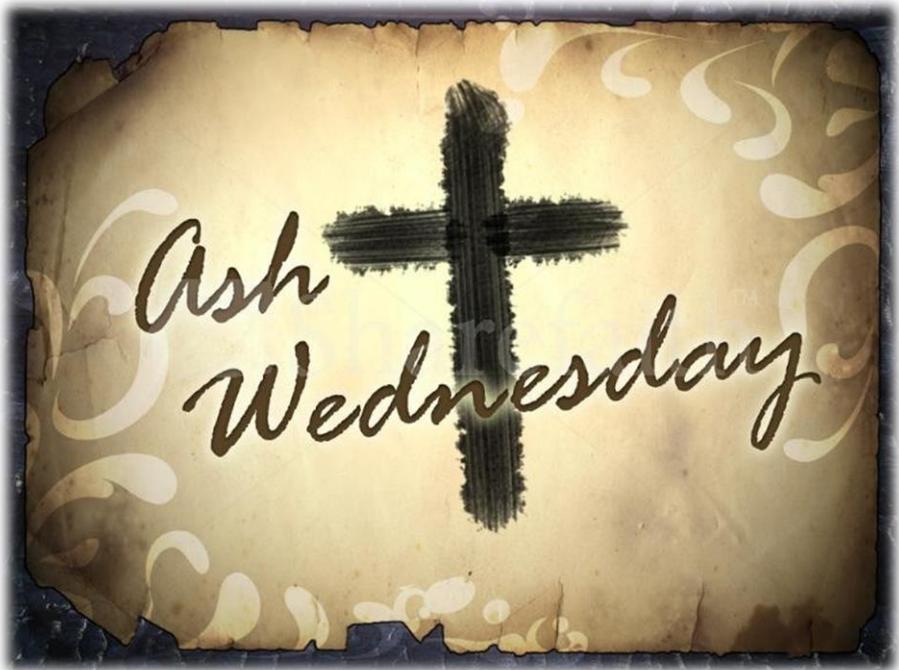


**Holy Communion
for Ash Wednesday**
at Home due to Coronavirus COVID-19



The Stour Valley Benefice
Cavendish, Clare, Hundon, Poslingford, Stoke-by-Clare & Wixoe

- A short introduction to the Season -

The characteristic feel of Lent is one of self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study, almsgiving, in preparation for Easter. It lasts for forty days and forty nights reminding us of Jesus' time spent in the wilderness, being tested by Satan.

It was also the traditional time when candidates for baptism were instructed, and those penitents prepared themselves, through fasting and penance, to be readmitted to communion. The whole Christian community were also invited to join them.

Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence; and so, it has become traditional to begin Lent on 'Ash Wednesday' by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross, although for safety reasons that isn't possible this year.

This season of penitence is demonstrated in our use of the simplest vestments, and many churches are kept bare of flowers and other decorations. The predominant colour of this season is Purple or Violet.


Growing in God

Spiritual Communion

The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ.

In joining with Revd Mark today as he celebrates the Eucharist from his own home, you too are able to join with him in communion. The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

Welcome and Introduction

Hymn – Forty days and forty nights

sung by St Martin's Voices

- 1 Forty days and forty nights
 thou wast fasting in the wild;
 forty days and forty nights
 tempted, and yet undefiled.

- 2 Sunbeams scorching all the day;
 chilly dew-drops nightly shed;
 prowling beasts about thy way;
 stones thy pillow, earth thy bed.

- 3 Let us thine endurance share,
 and awhile from joys abstain,
 with thee watching unto prayer,
 strong with thee to suffer pain?

- 4 And if Satan, vexing sore,
 flesh or spirit should assail,
 thou, his vanquisher before
 grant we may not faint nor fail.

- 5 So shall we have peace divine;
 holier gladness ours shall be;
 round us too shall angels shine,
 such as ministered to thee.

- 6 Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
 ever constant by thy side;
 that with thee we may appear
 at the eternal Eastertide.

George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870)
Francis Pott (1832-1909)

The Gathering

Priest: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

The Greeting

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: and also with you.

Introduction

Priest: Brothers and sisters in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

By carefully keeping these days, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

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.

**All: Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

The Collect

Priest: Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

All: Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading - Joel 2.1–2,12–17

Priest: A Reading from the Book of the Prophet 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?"'

Priest: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 51.1–18

Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness; according to the abundance of your compassion blot out my offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,

So that you are justified in your sentence and righteous in your judgement.

I have been wicked even from my birth, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

Behold, you desire truth deep within me and shall make me understand wisdom in the depths of my heart.

Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the bones you have broken may rejoice.

Turn your face from my sins and blot out all my misdeeds.

Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy spirit from me.

Give me again the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your gracious spirit;

Then shall I teach your ways to the wicked and sinners shall return to you.

Deliver me from my guilt, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
For you desire no sacrifice, else I would give it; you take no delight in burnt offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Priest: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading - 2 Corinthians 5.20b – 6.10

Priest: A Reading from Paul's Second letter to the Corinthians

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; 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, labours, 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 honour and dishonour, 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.

Priest: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 6.1–6,16–21

Priest: Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.
The Lord is a great God, O that today you would listen
to his voice. Harden not your hearts. *(cf. Psalm 95:3,8)*

All: Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Priest: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to
Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

‘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.

Priest: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

The Liturgy of Penitence

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

Priest: God the Father,

All: have mercy upon us.

Priest: God the Son,

All: have mercy upon us.

Priest: God the Holy Spirit,

All: have mercy upon us.

Priest: Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity,

All: have mercy upon us.

Priest: From all evil and mischief; from pride, vanity, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice; and from all evil intent,

All: good Lord, deliver us.

Priest: From sloth, worldliness and love of money; from hardness of heart and contempt for your word and your laws,

All: good Lord, deliver us.

Priest: From sins of body and mind; from the deceits of the world, the flesh and the devil,

All: good Lord, deliver us.

Priest: In all times of sorrow; in all times of joy; in the hour of death, and at the day of judgement,
All: good Lord, deliver us.

Priest: By the mystery of your holy incarnation; by your birth, childhood and obedience; by your baptism, fasting and temptation,
All: good Lord, deliver us.

Priest: By your ministry in word and work; by your mighty acts of power; and by your preaching of the kingdom,
All: good Lord, deliver us.

Priest: By your agony and trial; by your cross and passion; and by your precious death and burial,
All: good Lord, deliver us.

Priest: By your mighty resurrection; by your glorious ascension; and by your sending of the Holy Spirit,
All: good Lord, deliver us.

Priest: Give us true repentance; forgive us our sins of negligence and ignorance and our deliberate sins; and grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to your holy word.
**All: Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Silence is kept.

Priest: Make our hearts clean, O God;
All: and renew a right spirit within us.

All: Father eternal, giver of light and grace, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour, in

what we have thought, in what we have said and done, through ignorance, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault.

We have wounded your love and marred your image in us.

We are sorry and ashamed, and repent of all our sins.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past; and lead us out from darkness to walk as children of light.

Amen.

The Imposition of Ashes

Due to current COVID restrictions and guidance it isn't possible for us to share in the imposition of ashes, however I invite you to do so symbolically, making the sign of the cross on your own forehead.

Priest: Dear friends in Christ, I invite you to receive these ashes as a sign of the spirit of penitence with which we shall keep this season of Lent.

God our 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.

All: Amen.

The following is said:

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

Priest: God our Father, the strength of all who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers; and because, in

our weakness, we can do nothing good without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments we may please you, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Priest: Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.

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

The Preparation of the Table

Priest: 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.

All: Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer

Priest: The Lord is here.

All: His Spirit is with us.

Priest: Lift up your hearts

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give thanks and praise.

Priest: It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise, almighty God and everlasting Father, through Jesus Christ your Son.

For 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.

As we prepare to celebrate the Paschal mystery with joyful hearts and minds we bless you for your mercy and join with saints and angels for ever praising you and singing.

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.

Priest: All glory be to you, our heavenly Father, who, in your tender mercy, gave your only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there by his one oblation of himself once offered a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; he instituted, and in his holy gospel commanded us to continue a perpetual memory of his precious death until he comes again.

Hear us, merciful Father, we humbly pray, and grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit, we receiving these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine, according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper, he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: 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. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Jesus Christ is Lord

**All: Lord, by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.
You are the Saviour of the world.**

Priest: Therefore, Lord and heavenly Father, in remembrance of the precious death and passion, the mighty resurrection and glorious ascension of your dear Son Jesus Christ, we offer you through him this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

Grant that by his merits and death, and through faith in his blood, we and all your Church may receive forgiveness of our sins and all other benefits of his passion. Although we are unworthy, through our

manifold sins, to offer you any sacrifice, yet we pray that you will accept this the duty and service that we owe. Do not weigh our merits but pardon our offences and fill us all who share in this holy communion with your grace and heavenly blessing; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Blessing and honour and glory and power
 be yours for ever and ever.
 Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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

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

Breaking of the Bread

Priest: Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup

All: we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**All (*Sung*): Lamb of God,
 you take away the sin of the world,**

have mercy on us.

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Giving of Communion

Priest: Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**All: Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

Prayer after Communion

Priest: Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us both a sacrifice for sin and also an example of godly life: give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive these his inestimable gifts, and also daily endeavour to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

**All: God of our pilgrimage, you have fed us with the
bread of heaven.
Refresh and sustain us as we go forward on our
Lenten journey, in the name of Jesus Christ our
Saviour.
Amen.**

The Dismissal

Responsory

Priest: This is love, not that we loved God,
All: but that he loved us and sent his Son.

Priest: He is the sacrifice for our sins,
All: that we might live through him.

Priest: If God loves us so much
All: we ought to love one another.

Priest: If we love one another
All: God lives in us.

The Dismissal Gospel

Priest: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
All: 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 persons who need no repentance.

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

Hymn – From ashes to the living font

sung by St Martin's Voices

- 1 From ashes to the living font
your Church must journey, Lord,
baptised in grace, in grace renewed
by your most holy word.
- 2 Through fasting, prayer, and charity
your voice speaks deep within,
returning us to ways of truth
and turning us from sin.
- 3 From desert to the mountaintop
in Christ our way we see,
so, tempered by temptation's might
we might transfigured be.
- 4 For thirsting hearts let waters flow
our fainting souls revive;
and at the well your waters give
our everlasting life.
- 5 From ashes to the living font
your church must journey still:
through cross and tomb to Easter joy,
in Spirit-fire fulfilled.

Alan J Hommerding

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The Blessing

Priest: Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

The Dismissal

Priest: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: In the name of Christ. Amen.

#LIVE LENT



God's Story
Our Story

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