



**St. Peter's Cathedral**  
**Helena, Montana**

**The Rt. Rev. Marty Stebbins, Bishop**

**The Very Rev. Kendra Wilde, Dean**

# **THE HOLY EUCHARIST**

## **ASH WEDNESDAY**

**FEBRUARY 18, 2026**

**6:00PM AND LIVESTREAMED**

## **WELCOME**

*We're blessed by your presence. Maybe you have been worshipping at St. Peter's for years, or today may be your first time—we hope you find spiritual riches in this holy space. Whoever you are, wherever you hurt, whatever you bring, you are welcome at Christ's table and at St. Peter's Cathedral.*

*If you have a prayer request or would like more information, please complete a "Welcome" card in the pew rack and drop it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher as you leave.*

*Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the season of Lent in which we intentionally recall our identity as human beings—God's beloved—and immerse ourselves in Christ's saving grace. It is a season of repentance (turning again toward God), returning to the God who first loved us, and a season to be renewed in that love.*



***The People's responses  
are printed in boldface.***

*Please silence  
electronic devices.*

*We draw our liturgy from a variety of  
approved resources. Please see  
endnotes for sources and permission.*

**Our Ministers are the people assembled, including:**

**Presider / Preacher:** The Very Rev. Kendra Wilde

**Acolyte:** Eliza Loveland

**Lectors:** Ruth Ann Shuler  
Scott Hibbard

**Eucharistic Minister:** Meredith Bouchere

**Usher:** Grace Berger

**Organ:** John Goodwin

**St. Peter's Choir:**

Patty Dean, Interim Music Director

# **The Liturgy for Ash Wednesday**

## **The Imposition of Ashes**

*On this day, the priest enters in silence. The congregation stands.*

*Presider*      Blessed be the God of our salvation.

*People*      **Who bears our burdens and forgives our sins.**

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 brokenness, 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 People sit*

### **THE OLD TESTAMENT READING**

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?’”

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **THE RESPONSE: Psalm 103:8-14** *(Leader and people alternate by whole verse)*

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, \*  
slow to anger and of great kindness.

**<sup>9</sup> He will not always accuse us, \*  
nor will he keep his anger for ever.**

<sup>10</sup> He has not dealt with us according to our sins, \*  
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

**<sup>11</sup> For as the heavens are high above the earth, \*  
so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.**

<sup>12</sup> As far as the east is from the west, \*  
so far has he removed our sins from us.

**<sup>13</sup> As a father cares for his children, \*  
so does the LORD care for those who fear him.**

<sup>14</sup> For he himself knows whereof we are made; \*  
he remembers that we are but dust.

#### **THE NEW TESTAMENT READING**

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.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand, as able*

## THE GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

**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.

**Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

*The People sit*

## SERMON

The Very Rev. Kendra Wilde

*All stand, and the Presider 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.*

*The Presider 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.**

*An usher will indicate when the people come forward, pew by pew.*

*The ashes are imposed with the following words*

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

*The People may sit or kneel after receiving the ash and remain seated through the following Psalm.*

## **PSALM 51**

Patty Dean, Cantor

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; \*  
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

Wash me through and through from my wickedness \*  
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, \*  
and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only have I sinned \*  
and done what is evil in your sight.

And so you are justified when you speak \*  
and upright in your judgment.

Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, \*  
a sinner from my mother's womb.

For behold, you look for truth deep within me, \*  
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; \*  
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.

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

Hide your face from my sins \*  
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in 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 the joy of your saving help again \*  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

I shall teach your ways to the wicked, \*  
and sinners shall return to you.

Deliver me from death, O God, \*  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

Open my lips, O Lord, \*  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, \*  
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.

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

#### **LITANY OF PENITENCE**

*All*     **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 Presider 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 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 brokenness to life, has given power and commandment to God's ministers to declare and pronounce to the people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of sins. God pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts strive to live into God's holy Gospel. Therefore we beseech God to grant us true repentance and the gift of 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 compassionate and holy, and that at the last we may come to God's eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be always with you.

**And also with you.**

*The ministers and people may exchange with one another a sign of Christ's peace.*

## The Holy Communion

*The offertory sentence*

### THE OFFERTORY HYMN

*Ash Wednesday comes*

*Tune: Tallis' Canon*



1. Ash Wednes-day comes, and Lord we hear the
2. "Re - turn to me with all your heart," in
3. You call to us: the old the young; you
4. O God, most mer - ci - ful and kind, your



1. word for which our spir - its yearning; a - mid this world's dis-
2. ser - vice, fast - ing, weep-ing, too. O God, we seek a
3. sum - mon na - tions strong and weak. When we have drift - ed
4. love is not a prize we earn; yet in our lives with



1. tress and fear, we hear your lov - ing call, "Re - turn."
2. brand new start, a new be - gin - ing here with you.
3. toward the wrong, you call us back, your way to seek.
4. you we find the joy that comes when we re - turn.



## **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

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

**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.*

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. Jesus 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 Savior 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 Jesus 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:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

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 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 Father, now and for ever.

**AMEN.**

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**

*Silence*

### **Fraction Anthem**

O Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world.

**Have mercy upon us.**

O Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world.

**Have mercy upon us.**

O Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world.

**Grant us your peace.**

*The invitation to communion*

*An usher will indicate when the people come forward, pew by pew.*

*The People may sit before and after receiving communion*

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*Christ welcomes all to communion. ■ Receive the bread in open and outstretched hands and sip the wine, helping the minister guide the chalice to your lips. ■ If you do not want to sip the wine, it is also perfectly appropriate to receive the bread only. ■ You may respond to communion by saying “Amen.” ■ If you prefer a blessing, cross your hands over your chest. ■ Tell the minister if you require gluten-free elements or alcohol-free wine. ■ In the Episcopal Church Baptism generally precedes communion and is offered several times a year; please speak to a member of the clergy to learn more. ■*

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**Song**

*Return again*

Schlomo Carlebach

*The choir sings this through several times; the people hum or sing along as they choose*

**Return again, return again  
Return to the home of your soul  
Return to who you are  
Return to what you are  
Return to where you are  
Born and reborn again.**

*On behalf of those participating remotely, the Presider offers a prayer for Spiritual Communion.*

### **The Post Communion Prayer**

Let us pray.

*The people may stand or kneel.*

**Loving God,  
we give you thanks and praise,  
that when we were still far off  
you met us in your Son  
and brought us home.  
Dying and living, Jesus declared your love,  
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.  
May we who share Christ’s body live his risen life;  
we who drink his cup bring life to others;  
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.  
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,  
so we and all your children shall be free,  
and the whole earth live to praise your name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The People may sit*

## THE CHILDREN'S MOMENT

The Very Rev. Kendra Wilde

*In place of a Blessing, a solemn Prayer over the People is used, as follows:*

*The Presider says*

Be humble in the presence of your Lord.

*The people bow or kneel and the Presider says*

Grant, most merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace that they may serve you with a quiet mind, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The ministers and people leave quietly.*

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