

Gospel, continued

they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so 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. ¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves trea-

asures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

O God, you call your church to be ministers of reconciliation throughout the world. Inspire your church in its proclamation of the gospel and guide its ministries to build up the body of Christ. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you created the earth and all its inhabitants and you declared that it is good. Protect mountains and valleys, animals and plants, and direct us to be good stewards of all you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you desire peace. Direct governments and leaders to work for the well-being of all people and raise up advocates to speak and serve on behalf of the downtrodden. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

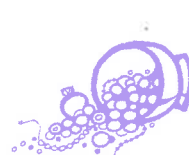
Thursday (commemoration of Martin Luther, renewer of the church, 1546) Psalm 25:1-10. **Friday** 2 Timothy 4:1-5. **Saturday** Matthew 9:2-13. **First Sunday in Lent** Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15.

CELEBRATE February 17, 2021

Volume 52, Number 1

CELEBRATE (ISSN 1083-3242, USPS 763-460) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 510 Marquette Ave, Suite 800, Minneapolis, MN, 55402. Periodicals postage paid in Twin Cities, MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Celebrate, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$4.90 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rates. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings from the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by Carl Schalk. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year B* (Augsburg Fortress, 2008). Please visit our Web site at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year B. CELEBRATE is protected through trademark registration in the U.S.A. and Canada.

14 of 15
Tracks 1 and 2



Celebrate

Ash Wednesday
February 17, 2021

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming day of the LORD, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community declares that God is gracious and asks God to spare the people lest the nations doubt God’s power to save.

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—
^{2a}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.

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,

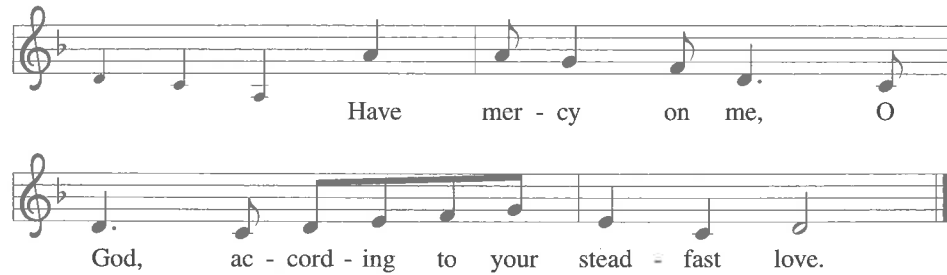
slow to anger, and abounding in
steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.
¹⁴Who knows whether he will not turn
and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for the LORD, your God?

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.

continued



Have mercy on me, O God, according to your ¹ steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out ¹ my offenses.

²Wash me through and through ¹ from my wickedness,
and cleanse me ¹ from my sin.

³For I know ¹ my offenses,
and my sin is ev- ¹ er before me.

⁴Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil ¹ in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right ¹ in your judgment. **R**

⁵Indeed, I was born ¹ steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my ¹ mother's womb.

⁶Indeed, you delight in truth ¹ deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom ¹ deep within.

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I ¹ shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- ¹ er than snow.

⁸Let me hear ¹ joy and gladness,
that the body you have broken ¹ may rejoice. **R**

⁹Hide your face ¹ from my sins,
and blot out ¹ all my wickedness.

¹⁰Create in me a clean ¹ heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- ¹ it within me.

¹¹Cast me not away ¹ from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spir- ¹ it from me.

¹²Restore to me the joy of ¹ your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- ¹ tiful Spirit. **R**

¹³Let me teach your ways ¹ to offenders,
and sinners shall be re- ¹ stored to you.

¹⁴Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of ¹ my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing ¹ of your righteousness.

¹⁵O Lord, o- ¹ pen my lips,
and my mouth shall pro- ¹ claim your praise.

¹⁶For you take no delight in sacrifice, or ¹ I would give it.
You are not pleased ¹ with burnt offering.

¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a ¹ troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will ¹ not despise. **R**

First Reading, continued

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?'"

or Isaiah 58:1-12 [not printed]

Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and clothing the naked. Sincere repentance will lead to a dramatic improvement of their condition.

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For 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! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended

ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "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.

²⁴So 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. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵⁴And 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. ⁶But 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.

¹⁶⁴And 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,

continued