



**The Parish Church of Saint Peter,  
West Green**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February  
2021  
ASH WEDNESDAY**

After the latest government announcement, we have taken the decision to cease holding services in church until we reach better times.

**WELCOME** to our service today  
at St Peter's

We hope you will find this service sheet, which reflects the service that we would have held in church, useful for prayer and as an information service.

### **Hymns in this service sheet**

At least at home you have the chance to sing the hymns!

If you use the internet you should be able to find the music accompaniment for them, so you can sing along.

Singing can sometimes distract us from the words we sing. Now we have a chance to catch up on the words, which, like poetry, can require a further reading. Thus we might find even greater riches in understanding and more to learn, appreciate and enjoy. Fr Paul

Today, Ash Wednesday, is the start of **Lent**; a season of forty days, ending on Holy Saturday (3<sup>rd</sup> April).

It is a time of reflection, repentance and preparation before the celebrations of Easter.

Why 40 days? Because it reflects the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness before he began his ministry

The colour for Lent is purple – the colour of repentance and preparation.

**Before you start reading this service, you may like to find last year's Palm Cross or have one of the wooden crosses nearby**

### **THE GATHERING**

*We get ready to worship God*

*Opening hymn:*

***Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;  
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,  
for we have no help but thee;  
yet possessing every blessing,  
if our God our Father be.***

***Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us:  
all our weakness thou dost know;  
thou didst tread this earth before us,  
thou didst feel its keenest woe;  
lone and dreary, faint and weary,  
through the desert thou didst go.***

***Spirit of our God, descending,  
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,  
love with every passion blending,  
pleasure that can never cloy:***

**thus provided, pardoned, guided,  
nothing can our peace destroy.**

*James Edmeston (1791-1867)*

## THE GREETING

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

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you  
**and also with you.**

Sisters and brothers 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.

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

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

THE COLLECT - *A prayer which collects or  
sums up our worship themes for today*

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

*Silence is kept*

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.**

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

*The Bible readings for today:*

OLD TESTAMENT READING *from Joel*  
*2.1-2, 12-17; Through Joel, God commands*  
*His people to repent, telling them to turn to*  
*Him wholeheartedly and to mourn. He is*  
*looking at their hearts and not at the*  
*externals*

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—<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Yet even now, says the LORD,  
return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with  
mourning; <sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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?

<sup>15</sup> Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly;  
<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> 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?"

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 51.1-17** *a Psalm of David*

*a prayer for cleansing and pardon, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba*

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

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 judgement.

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.

**NEW TESTAMENT READING** *from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians 5.20b - 6.10; Paul wants us to become so thoroughly transformed that we become members of a "new creation."*

<sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

<sup>2</sup> 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!

<sup>3</sup> We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry,

<sup>4</sup> but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup> beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup> by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup> truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup> in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup> as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup> as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

THE GOSPEL (*The good news*)

**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.

**Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*John 8.2-11*

<sup>2</sup> Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. <sup>3</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, <sup>4</sup> they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery.

<sup>5</sup> Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' <sup>6</sup> They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

<sup>7</sup> When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' <sup>8</sup> And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup> When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup> Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' <sup>11</sup> She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **John 8.2-11 Forgiveness**

It is rare that we have the opportunity to reflect on this passage. It serves us especially well today, on Ash Wednesday.

The scribes and the Pharisees are callously cruel towards this woman in bringing her into the Temple and setting her before Jesus.

They prolonged her suffering. They used her to set Jesus up. They wanted to see if Jesus will obey the law of Moses, requiring her to be stoned to death for her sin. If he did then they could use that against Jesus, for he had a growing reputation for forgiveness and compassion. They wanted to spoil his reputation.

If he did not obey the Law, they could report that and use that against him and vilify him. One way or another they wanted to hurt Jesus.

Jesus knew well what they were doing. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground, maybe in the dust on the ground, so that they could see what he had written.

One commentator suggests that he wrote down the sins of the scribes and Pharisees, for Jesus would know what they were.

He showed the scribes he too could write, even suggesting the stone tablets of the covenant, 'written with the finger of God.' (Ex 31.18)

Then looking up and looking them all in the eye, Jesus said, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.'

Jesus let his words sink in and do their work. He bent down again. He continued to write; the only time we know of him writing.

It is interesting that the eldest left first. They had sinned more. Maybe witnessed death more. And become more sensitive? Then all left.

They did not obey the law of Moses, but the authority of Jesus.

I think Jesus, asking the woman whether anyone had condemned her, helped her begin to restore herself. Jesus completed that process by

not condemning her. He restored her. He forgave her. He helped her feel healed and whole again. 'Go your way.' You have a fresh start and a renewed sense of innocence. She was given hope. She was given the sense that she had the capacity and strength, 'not to sin again'.

On Ash Wednesday the sign of the cross is made on our brows in palm cross ash; the priest says, 'Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.'

We are being imbued with the capacity and strength to turn away from sin, even though it can feel as though we are addicted to sin.

Realistically the woman, like the rest of us, would sin again, not necessarily in the same way, but in some, indeed many other ways.

This story reveals the insight, understanding, compassion and encouragement we can draw on from our most generous lover of our souls, our

most blessed and wondrous Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Perhaps this story tells us that in Christ's estimate the passionate sins are less grievous than the cold, calculated ones, of evil intent.

It reminds us, too, that whenever and for whatever reason we fail, we can trust in Jesus' healing and forgiving love when we repent.

There is always another chance with Jesus. Even if we fail ten thousand times, so long as we pick ourselves up ten thousand and one times and keep on trying, we are a winner with Christ.

Of course, just as Christ is merciful to us so must we be merciful with others. Not like the scheming scribes and Pharisees longing for the discomfiture of others. We must forgive, so that we can be forgiven.

Then we are turning, '... away from sin and being faithful to Christ'. **Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

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.**

**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 and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

**Lord, have mercy.**

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.

**Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you, Lord all our past unfaithfulness: The pride, hypocrisy and impatience of our lives.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work. **Lord, have mercy.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us.

**Lord, have mercy.**

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 judgements, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbours, 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; ***favourably hear us, for your mercy is great.***

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation, ***that we may show 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.***

*Silence*

We have not loved you, Lord.

***We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbours 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.***

*Imposition*

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. ***Amen.***

*Please hold either last year's Palm Cross or a wooden cross, (maybe the one recently sent you), before you or just make the sign of the cross upon your own brow whilst saying the words, 'Remember that you are dust etc. ...'*

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

*Please keep a time of quiet for reflection, gratitude and the desire to amend your life.*

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.***

**THE PEACE**

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God 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.***

*During this hymn we would normally gather the gifts of the church.*

*Please continue to use this as an opportunity to give to the work of the church.*

***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 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,  
rise up and follow thee.***

***O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,***

**where Jesus knelt to share with  
thee  
the silence of eternity,  
interpreted by love!  
interpreted by love!**

**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,  
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,  
O still small voice of calm.**

*John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-92)*

## HOLY COMMUNION

**Please see the guidelines later in the  
service sheet for Spiritual Communion**

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the Blessed are  
you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your  
goodness we have this bread to offer, which  
earth has given and human hands have made. It  
will become for us the bread of life.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.  
Through your goodness we have this wine to  
offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands.  
It will become our spiritual drink.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

Pray, my dears, that this our sacrifice may be  
acceptable to God the Almighty Father.

**May the Lord accept the sacrifice  
at your hands, for the praise and  
glory of his name, for our good  
and the good of all his Church.**

## Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here. **His Spirit is with us.**  
Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

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 Easter feast with  
joyful hearts and minds we bless you for your  
mercy and join with saints and angels for ever  
praising you and singing:

**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. Amen**

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through  
Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his  
command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken  
bread and wine outpoured may be for us the



body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.



When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, 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. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.



So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus:

***Dying you destroyed our death,  
rising you restored our life:  
Lord Jesus, come in glory.***

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us, in the company of our blessed Lady, ... and all the saints to feast at your table in heaven. Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**



### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Trusting in the compassion of God, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

***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.***

### THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

*The celebrant breaks the consecrated bread, saying*

*Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup.*

***We proclaim the death of the  
Lord until he comes.***

***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.***

### INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*Before the distribution the celebrant says*

*This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to his supper.*

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

*Communion Hymn:*

***Bread of heaven, on thee we feed,  
for thy flesh is meat indeed;  
ever may our souls be fed  
with this true and living bread;  
day by day with strength supplied  
through the life of him who died.***

**Vine of heaven, thy blood supplies  
this blest cup of sacrifice;  
'Tis thy wounds our healing give,  
to thy cross we look and live:  
Thou our life! O let us be  
rooted, grafted, built on thee.**

*Josiah Conder (1789-1855)*

*A time for silent reflection & thanksgiving is kept*

#### POST COMMUNION PRAYER

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.

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

#### THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

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

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

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 upon you and all whom you love and pray for, living and departed, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*Hymn:*

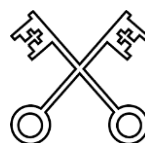
**Be thou my vision, O Lord of my  
heart,  
Be all else but naught to me, save  
that thou art;  
Be thou my best thought in the  
day and the night,  
Both waking and sleeping, thy  
presence my light.**

**Be thou my wisdom, be thou my  
true word,  
Be thou ever with me, and I with  
thee, Lord;  
Be thou my great Father, and I thy  
true son;  
Be thou in me dwelling, and I with  
thee one.**

**High King of heaven, thou  
heaven's bright Sun,  
O grant me its joys after vict'ry is  
won;  
Great Heart of my own heart,  
whatever befall,  
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of  
all.**

*Irish (8<sup>th</sup>C), tr Mary Byrne (1880-1931) versified by  
Eleanor Hull (1860-1935)*

Be in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**



**And on this rock  
I will build my church**

*For those at home:*

### **A Short Form of Spiritual Communion**

Start with a moment of reflection about the things for which you might thank God and then reflect on the things about which you are sorry and ask forgiveness. Say the collect, read the Gospel, say some prayers and then open your hands to imagine receiving the sacrament and say thank you. Finish by saying the Grace or just, Amen.