



## **An Offering of Reflection, Prayer, and Music**

Ash Wednesday

02.17.2021

# Welcome to Trinity's online community!

**As you watch the Live Stream of this service, feel free to add comments, likes, etc. to the comment section at any time!**

When we don't have to practice social distancing, the people of Trinity Church gather around a table piled high with spiritual food, and there is a place for you and everyone at the table, whatever your religious practice may be. For now, this is a time of sharing and connecting with one another, knowing that we are bound together by God's love. Trinity Church is a metropolitan house of prayer, a community of worship and spiritual inquiry, welcoming all people. Recognizing our common brokenness, yet rejoicing in the reconciling love of God through Jesus Christ, we nurture one another in our spiritual life together.

Trinity Church is an Episcopal Church and a member parish of the Diocesan Partnership of Western New York and Northwest Pennsylvania in the United States and is a part of the Anglican Communion, which is based in England, but found worldwide. If you would like to learn more about Trinity, see all our contact information on the last page.

*Cover photo by  
Casey Page, Billings  
Gazette staff*

## PRELUDE

### CENTERING PRAYER

Gracious God,  
Guardian of the Night, and Guarantor of the day:  
This day is a gift from you.  
This day is like none other you  
have ever given, or we have ever received.  
This Wednesday dazzles us with gifts  
and newness and possibility.  
This Wednesday burdens us with the tasks of the day,  
for we are already halfway home  
    halfway back to committees and memos,  
    halfway back to calls and appointments,  
    halfway on to next Sunday,  
    halfway back, half frazzled, half expectant,  
    half turned toward you, half rather not.

But this Wednesday is a long way from home, and,  
while all our Wednesdays are marked by ashes —  
    we begin this day with that taste of ash in our mouth:  
        of failed hope and broken promises,  
        of forgotten children and frightened women,  
we ourselves are ashes to ashes, dust to dust;  
we can taste our mortality  
    as we roll the ash around on our tongues.

*The centering  
prayer is adapted  
from a poem by  
Bible scholar Walter  
Brueggeman.*

*continued on next page*

We are able to ponder our ashness with  
some confidence,  
only because our every Wednesday of ashes  
anticipates your Easter victory  
over that dry, flaky taste of death.

On this Wednesday, we submit our ashen way to you —  
to you, Easter parade of newness.  
Before the sun sets,  
take our Wednesday and Easter us.  
Easter us to joy and energy  
and courage and freedom;  
Easter us that we may be fearless for your truth.  
Come here and Easter our Wednesday with  
mercy and justice and peace and generosity.

We pray as we wait for the Risen One who comes soon.  
**Amen.**

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

### FIRST READING

JOB 42:1-6

**T**hen Job answered God,  
“I know that you can do all things: you have only to think something, and it is done.  
“You asked, ‘Who is this obscuring my plans with such ignorant words?’

“That was me. I’ve been spouting off about things I can’t understand, about wonders beyond my  
experience and my knowledge.

“You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak; I will ask the questions and you will answer me!’

“Formerly I knew you only by word of mouth, but now I see you with my own eyes. And so I  
now take back all that I said, and repent in dust and ashes.”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

**Thanks be to God.**

### MIDDLE READING

“OPENING WORDS” BY DENISE LEVERTOV

I believe the earth  
exists, and  
in each minim mote  
of its dust the holy  
glow of thy candle.  
Thou  
unknown I know,  
thou spirit,  
giver,  
lover of making, of the  
wrought letter,

*The Bible readings  
are taken from  
The Inclusive Bible:  
The First Egalitarian  
Translation by  
Priests for Equality.*

*The Middle Reading  
fills the role of a  
Bible reading, but  
it doesn't come  
from the Bible. It is  
our way of trying  
to listen for God's  
ongoing word as it  
is spoken outside the  
limits of the Bible.  
Most often, we turn  
to contemporary  
poets for this  
reading.*

*Denise Levertov (1923 – 1997) was English born and emigrated to the US in 1947. Here she published more than 20 volumes of poetry. In the 1960s, Levertov was active in the anti-war movement in the United States. Additionally, she worked as a poetry editor the The Nation in the '60s and for Mother Jones in the '70s.*

*The four Gospels hold the core of Christian spiritual wisdom, reflecting the earliest stories and images of Jesus. Like all Scripture, they are not definitive prescriptions but narrative stories requiring endless interpretation.*

*Nobody set out to write The Bible. The Hebrew Scriptures were created over many centuries by many people to record the Jewish People's experience of God. The same is true of the Christian Scriptures, some of which were letters written to a specific audience in response to specific needs—and were then found to be helpful to the faithful even after fulfilling their original purpose.*

wrought flower,  
iron, deed, dream.  
Dust of the earth,  
help thou my  
unbelief. Drift  
gray become gold, in the beam of  
vision. I believe with  
doubt. I doubt and  
interrupt my doubt with belief. Be,  
beloved, threatened world.  
Each minim  
mote.  
Not the poisonous  
luminescence forced  
out of its privacy,  
The sacred lock of its cell  
broken. No,  
the ordinary glow  
of common dust in ancient sunlight.  
Be, that I may believe. Amen.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

**Thanks be to God.**

## THE GOSPEL

MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before others to attract their attention; if you do this, you will have no reward from your Abba God in heaven.

"When you do acts of charity, for example, don't have it trumpeted before you; that is what hypocrites do in the synagogues and the streets, that they may be praised by others. The truth is, they've already received their reward in full. But when you do acts of charity, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing; your good deeds must be done in secret, and your Abba God—who sees all that is done in secret—will repay you.

"And when you pray, don't behave like the hypocrites; they love to pray standing up in the synagogues and on street corners for people to see them. The truth is, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go to your room, shut the door, and pray to God who is in that secret place, and your Abba God—who sees all that is done in secret—will reward you.

"And when you fast, don't look depressed like the hypocrites. They deliberately neglect their appearance to let everyone know that they are fasting. The truth is, they have already received their reward. But when you fast, brush your hair and wash your face. Don't let anyone know you're fasting except your Abba God, who sees all that is done in secret. And Abba God—who sees everything that is done in secret—will reward you.

"Don't store up earthly treasures for yourselves, which moths and rust destroy and thieves can break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can destroy them and thieves cannot break in and steal them. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be as well."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

**Thanks be to God.**

## HOMILY

THE REV. MATT LINCOLN

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

### AN INVITATION TO RECEIVE THE BLESSINGS OF OBSERVING LENT

*"A Blessing for  
Ash Wednesday"  
by the painter and  
liturgical writer Jan  
Richardson*

To receive this blessing,  
all you have to do  
is let your heart break.  
Let it crack open.  
Let it fall apart  
so that you can see  
its secret chambers,  
the hidden spaces  
where you have hesitated  
to go.

Your entire life  
is here, inscribed whole  
upon your heart's walls:  
every path taken  
or left behind,  
every face you turned toward  
or turned away,  
every word spoken in love  
or in rage,  
every line of your life  
you would prefer to leave

in shadow,  
every story that shimmers  
with treasures known  
and those you have yet  
to find.

It could take you days  
to wander these rooms.  
Forty, at least.

And so let this be  
a season for wandering  
for trusting the breaking  
for tracing the tear  
that will return you

to the One who waits  
who watches  
who works within  
the rending  
to make your heart  
whole.

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Gracious and merciful God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all, blessing those who have engaged in a fearless moral inventory and sought to be reconciled with you, with one another, and within themselves. Create in us now, O Lord, new and reclaimed hearts, so that when we turn to you and confess our sins we will have opened ourselves fully to accept your forgiveness.

*A period of silence is kept.*

*As Job did, this year  
we are marking  
ourselves with ashes,  
dust or dirt. If we are  
with others in a pod,  
we can mark each  
other, according to  
our preferences.*

### ASHES

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 life and life everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Savior we now pray. **Amen.**

### PSALM 51: 11-13, 15-18

**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.**

**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 AND HEALING

Let us pray.

**Gracious God:**

**We confess to you and to one another,  
and to the whole communion of saints  
that there is a far distance  
between what we claim to believe and value  
and how we actually live our lives.**

*A moment of quiet is held.*

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.**

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.**

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness; the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives, **we confess to you, O God.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, **we confess to you, O God.**

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves, **we confess to you, O God.**

Our devotion to materialism and creature comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work, **we confess to you, O God.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us, **we confess to you, O God.**

Accept our repentance, O God, 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.**

*"To forgive is to set  
a prisoner free and  
discover that the  
prisoner was you."  
~Lewis B. Smedes*

*These Lenten  
prayers are adapted  
from Gleanings by  
Episcopal Liturgist,  
Ruth Meyers.*

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, Beloved, and keep us close;  
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.**

Help us to remember that we are of the Earth, formed of the primal stardust, and to Earth we will return; that whether we live or die, we belong to you, O God; that we can never be lost, only found, more and more.

O God, we ask that you bless us as we enter this holy time of Lent, that it may be a time of healing and nurture for us. Protect us from self-hatred, self-violence, and addiction; help us to be faithful, gentle, healing disciples of self-care; and comfort us with your unconditional love. Help us to encounter a place of healing in our woundedness, protect us from the power of evil, and bathe us in the hope of your Resurrection.

Remind us now that we are forgiven, absolved of all we have confessed and for which we seek repentance and reconciliation. Help us to know that you do not desire our death but that we turn from our estrangement and self-orbit. May we give you thanks and praise as we receive your healing power; and begin this journey of Lent. **Amen.**

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

## CONCLUDING PRAYERS

Now, as 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.**

*This version of the Lord's Prayer is what many of us grew up learning. It is also the version shared at the end of many 12 Step meetings. Although it is important to stay fresh and engaged by the words of our prayers, it is also important to be reminded that we as individuals are part of a great cloud of witnesses who have been inspired to turn to God in prayer throughout the ages.*

*\*Jesus revealed a new, personal sense of relationship with God by addressing God as something like "Papa." Always feel free to use your most meaningful name for God in saying the Lord's Prayer.*



*The prayer of St. Chrysostom is found in both Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer.*

#### PRAYER OF ST. CHRYSOSTOM

**Gracious God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.**

*This blessing is based on the words of Henri Frederic Amiel (1821-1881).*

#### BLESSING

Life is short. We do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who make the journey with us. So be swift to love. Make haste to be kind. And may the blessing of God, who made us, who loves us, and who animates and guides us, be with you now and always. **Amen.**

#### DISMISSAL

Take your leave, trusting that we are made one in Christ, to shine in the world with God's light. **Thanks be to God.**

#### POSTLUDE

**Wednesday, February 24, @7pm** Trinity will host a Zoom appearance by Debby Irving, author of "Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race." Irving, who is white and was raised in upper middle class Massachusetts, writes plainly and clearly about her discoveries of how much she had benefited over the years because she was white and how she began to question her long-held assumptions about race and culture. Her book is eye opening, possibly life changing in its revelations about white privilege. We encourage you to read the book though it is not a requirement for her appearance. To register, click on [kindridgiving link](#).

We encourage you to purchase your book locally from [Talking Leaves](#). It is also available at the public library and at a number of online venues.



*Announcements continued on next page*

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### **Make Me An Instrument of Peace: A Group Discussion on Civil Discourse**

On Tuesday evenings @7pm during Lent, Tim Lane and Jeffrey Tooke will facilitate Make Me An Instrument of Peace: A Group Discussion on Civil Discourse. Designed by the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations, Make Me An Instrument of Peace is a group discussion study designed to help us bridge the divides that keep us from moving forward. During our evening gatherings, the group will watch video material taught by a team of experts in civil discourse and then discuss the subject matter as a group. The topics covered will include:

- Civil Discourse in Context
- Tenets for Civil Discourse
- Values-Based Conversations
- The Complexity of Policy
- Sacred Space for Debate

An introduction to the Make Me An Instrument of Peace material can be viewed [here](#).

Join Tim and Jeff starting **Tuesday, February 23 @7pm** to begin this Lenten journey using this zoom link for the discussion group:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81668634672?pwd=eTVjZXFoNzYyZHZvSHZONGlNUUowZz09>

Meeting ID: 816-6863-4672

Passcode: trintalk

If you are interested in joining the discussion group or have questions about the group, please send an email to Jeffrey Tooke at [jeffrey@bayharboradvisors.com](mailto:jeffrey@bayharboradvisors.com) to receive more information.

### **SERVICES @TRINITY**

In the interest of staying connected and sharing what we can of our spiritual life together, here's our service lineup:

**SUNDAY MORNING @10:30** Live streaming on Facebook. The Sunday online Live Stream service remains accessible as a video recording on Trinity's [Facebook](#) page and [YouTube](#) page after the service is over.

**TRINITY @7** Zoom gatherings on Sunday night @7pm featuring poetry and jazz.

**WEDNESDAY @NOON** Zoom gatherings offering prayer and holy conversation.

**THURSDAY @7** Zoom gatherings @7pm offering the wisdom and fellowship of 12-Step recovery.

**THURSDAY @NOON TO 2PM OR BY APPOINTMENT** The church will be open for private prayer or meditation. You can chat quietly with one of the volunteers, or if you need, you can ask them to pray with you. Please wear a mask. You are required to sign a registry at the entrance to be used in the event contact tracing is necessary.

This plan will be in place for the foreseeable future. It's clear we will not have any sizable groups for many months to come. If you have ideas about safe ways to use our building for spiritual enrichment, please contact the church office to share your ideas and plans for implementation. Please continue to read the newsletters to stay informed.

Click here to [find the readings](#).

Email your request for a [link to the Zoom worship services here](#).



Paul Cena, *Director*  
Laura Munson, *Section Leader*  
Betsy Curtis  
Cheryl Fisher  
Elaine "Gretchen" Lodick  
Christina Kinney  
Suzanne Fatta, *Section Leader*  
Susana Bernhardt  
Sue Doherty  
Mimi Dow  
Carol Case Siracuse  
John Clayton, *Section Leader*  
Peter Dow  
Dan Galley  
Steve Shanley  
Tyler Mecklenburg, *Section Leader*  
Peter Curtis  
Tom Owen

12steps@Trinity, based on 12-step spirituality