

# *Ash Wednesday*



*Evangelical Lutheran Church  
of the Holy Trinity*

*February 22, 2023  
12:10 p.m.*

## *Liturgy of Holy Communion*

*(Congregational responses are in bold case.  
Please remember to turn off your cell phone. Thank you.)*

**Significance of the Day:** 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.

### *Gathering*

*(All gather in silence. To gather with a sense of community in worship, please be seated in the front pews on either side. You may kneel for self-examination in prayer before God. Please honor the silent meditation of others.)*

Greetings and Announcements

Silent Prayer

*The assembly stands.*

Psalm 51:1-17      *Psalm will be recited in unison.*

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | lovingkindness;\*  
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.
- 2 Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,\*  
and cleanse me | from my sin.
- 3 For I know | my transgressions,\*  
and my sin is ev- | er before me.
- 4 Against you only | have I sinned\*  
and done what is evil | in your sight.
- 5 And so you are justified | when you speak\*  
and upright | in your judgment.
- 6 Indeed, I have been wicked | from my birth,\*  
a sinner from my | mother's womb.

- 7 For behold, you look for truth | deep within me,\*  
and will make me understand | wisdom secretly.
- 8 Purge me from my sin, and I | shall be pure;\*  
wash me, and I shall be | clean indeed.
- 9 Make me hear of | joy and gladness,\*  
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.
- 10 Hide your face | from my sins,\*  
and blot out all | my iniquities.
- 11 Create in me a clean | heart, O God,\*  
and renew a right spir- | it within me.
- 12 Cast me not away | from your presence,\*  
and take not your Holy | Spirit from me.
- 13 Give me the joy of your saving | help again\*  
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.
- 14 I shall teach your ways | to the wicked,\*  
and sinners shall re- | turn to you.
- 15 Deliver me from | death, O God,\*  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of | my  
salvation.
- 16 Open my | lips, O Lord,\*  
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.
- 17 Had you desired it, I would have | offered sacrifice,\*  
but you take no delight | in burnt-offerings.

#### Invitation to Lent

Brothers and sisters in Christ, today with the whole Church, we enter the time of remembering Jesus' Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent - self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love - strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

## Confession of Sin

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*The assembly kneels, as able, or sits. Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.*

Most holy and merciful God,  
**we confess to you and to one another,  
and before the whole company of heaven,  
that we have sinned by our fault,  
by our own fault,  
by our own most grievous fault,  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

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, O God.**

We have shut our ears 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, O God.**

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

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

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

**Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

#### Imposition of Ashes

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is encouraged to come forward to the foot of the chancel steps to receive ashes. All baptized Christians are encouraged to participate. Psalm 90 is suggested for reflection and prayer.*

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

*After those who desire ashes have received them, **all may kneel**, and the minister continues.*

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,  
**that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,  
**bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

*The presiding minister stands and addresses the assembly.*

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

**Amen.**

*After a period of silence for reflection, **the assembly stands.***

Greeting

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. *A brief silence is kept.*

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.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## *Word*

First Reading

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

A reading from Joel:

1 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,  
2 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.

12 Yet even now, says the Lord,  
return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;  
13 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.

14 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?

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
sanctify a fast;  
call a solemn assembly;

16 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.

17 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.**

Psalm 103:8-14

*The psalm will be spoken responsively by whole verse.*

8 LORD, you are full of compas- | sion and mercy,  
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love;

**9 you will not al- | ways accuse us,  
nor will you keep your an- | ger forever.**

10 You have not dealt with us according | to our sins,  
nor repaid us according to | our iniquities.

**11 For as the heavens are high a- | bove the earth,  
so great is your steadfast love for | those who fear you.**

12 As far as the east is | from the west,  
so far have you removed our transgres- | sions from us.

**13 As a father has compassion | for his children,  
so you have compassion for those who fear | you, O LORD.**

14 For you know well how | we are formed;  
you remember that we | are but dust.

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b – 6:10

A reading from Second Corinthians:

20b We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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



way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see – we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 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.**

*The assembly stands*

Gospel Acclamation

**Return to the Lord your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“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.

<sup>2</sup>“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. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“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. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>“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. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>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.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The assembly is seated.*

Sermon

Pastor Brenda Martin

*Silence for reflection follows the sermon.*

*The assembly stands to proclaim the Word of God in song.*



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Hymn of the Day

Lord Jesus, Think on Me

1 Lord Je - sus, think on me, and purge a - way my sin;  
2 Lord Je - sus, think on me, by anx - ious thoughts op - pressed;  
3 Lord Je - sus, think on me, nor let me go a - stray;  
4 Lord Je - sus, think on me, that, when the flood is past,  
from self - ish pas - sions set me free and make me pure with - in.  
let me your lov - ing ser - vant be and taste your prom - ised rest.  
through dark - ness and per - plex - i - ty point out your cho - sen way.  
I may the e - ter - nal bright - ness see and share your joy at last.

Prayers of Intercession

Sustained by God’s abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation, responding, Merciful God, receive our prayer.

*A brief silence.*

O Lord, our God, you gather your church and call us to return to you. Accompany us throughout our Lenten pilgrimage. Create in us clean hearts and renew all the baptized to declare your praise. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Renew your creation, O God. Bring rains to parched places and heal lands affected by a changing climate, that all inhabitants of the earth experience your abundance. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Renew the nations, O God. Give voice to those on the margins and resolve to world leaders who seek to protect those most vulnerable. Loosen the bonds of injustice and bring an end to all violence, oppression, and persecution. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Renew your people, O God. Respond to those who cry out to you in secret or in seclusion. Equip us with compassion to care for those who experience homelessness, food insecurity, economic hardship, and illness. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Renew this congregation, O God. Inspire our faith formation ministries and those who teach and lead. Invigorate us with lifelong curiosity and wonder as we grow as your disciples. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, we give thanks for all your faithful ones of every time and place. Renew us by the example of their lives of prayer and service, and at the last, bring us with them into your everlasting presence. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Are there others for whom we should pray?

**P:** We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
**Amen.**

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

*The people greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace saying, "Peace be with you. And also with you."*

*Meal*

*The assembly is seated.*

The Offering of Our Gifts

Interlude on *Southwell*

(Fedak)

*The assembly stands.*

Offertory Verse

**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. Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me  
with your free Spirit.**

Offertory Prayer

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of  
grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your  
bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**



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 our thanks and praise.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,  
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,  
who preached good news to the poor,  
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,  
we await his coming in glory.

Send now, we pray, your Spirit upon these gifts of bread and wine that they  
may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,  
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,  
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

The Breaking of Bread

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Happy 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.**

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all is now ready.

*The assembly sits.*

Distribution

*After all have communed and returned to their pews, the assembly stands for the blessing.*

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you unto eternal life.

**Amen.**

*The Post Communion Canticle is said as the table is cleared.*

**I called to my God for help; he heard me from his temple. His arms reached down to save and rescue me from my foes. The manna from heaven for Israel is his Son, the Bread of Life!**

Let us pray, *A brief silence is kept.*

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*Silence for reflection. The assembly kneels, as able, or sits until after the dismissal.*

## *Sending*

Blessing

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

Dismissal

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness;  
be of good courage;  
hold fast to that which is good;  
render to no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;  
help the afflicted; honor all people;  
love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **About Ashes and Ash Wednesday**

Ash Wednesday received its name from the practice of imposing ashes on this day which marks the beginning of the forty days of Lent. The imposition of ashes is a sign that we have confessed our sinfulness and is an outward sign of inward penitence. Experience has shown that Christians find this practice rich in meaning and powerful in emotional impact. After being long neglected, this practice has been revived in Lutheran congregations over the past several decades.

The use of ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in Scripture (for example see Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26; and Matthew 11:21.) The early Christian Church accepted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external



mark of penitence, sorrow for sin.

Why use an ancient symbol now? Because the symbol speaks to us in several ways. First, ashes remind us of God's condemnation of sin – as God said to Adam, “Dust you are and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19.) Second, ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. Ashes were used in the absence of soap, and on Ash Wednesday the ashes are a penitential reminder of God's cleansing of us in Baptism. Third, ashes remind us of the shortness of human life – as we say at the time of burial of the dead, “We commit his/her body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” The imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday is a reminder that one day those words will be said over each of us. Finally, as mentioned above, ashes are a symbol of repentance.

Palm branches saved from the previous year's celebration of the Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday are burned to make the ashes used on Ash Wednesday.

### **Invitation to Communion**

Holy Communion is the body and blood of Jesus Christ by which our Lord is truly present to forgive sin and bring life and salvation. All baptized Christians who believe this promise are welcome to commune. Parents with children are encouraged to come forward together. Children who do not yet receive communion will receive the blessing of the Church from the Pastor.

### **Lenten Morning Prayer**

**Lenten Morning Prayer** begins tomorrow, Thursday, February 23, 8:30 a.m. We gather **daily**, Monday through Friday, in the choir pews through April 5. Each member of the congregation will be named in prayer during Morning Prayer through the Lenten season.

### **Lenten Evening Prayer**

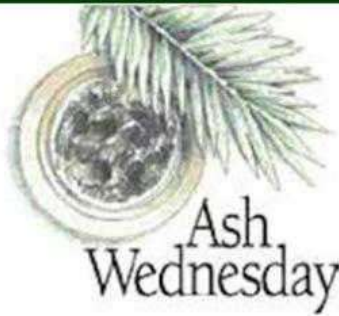
Lenten Evening Prayer will have every Wednesday during Lent at **6:15 p.m.** (March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 and in Holy Week, **7:00 p.m.** Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, April 3, 4, and 5).

### **Stations of the Cross**

Each Friday evening (February 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31) at 6:00 p.m. we will pray the Stations of the Cross. This devotion allows us to spend time with the Lord on his journey to the cross for our salvation. Come and spend some time with him during his last hours ending with his crucifixion.

## *Serving Today*

Presiding Minister	Pastor Brenda Martin
Organist	Andy Joos
Liturgical Deacon	Linda Armstrong
Communion Assistant	Catherine Snyder
Usher	Ed Pitcher
Altar Guild	Bonnie Long



**Dear Lord, As we enter  
this Solemn and Holy  
Season, we pray that  
you would send your  
Holy Spirit upon us that  
we might prepare ourselves  
for these coming 40 days of Lent.  
Even though we may no longer wear sackcloth  
and ashes, we do seek to humble ourselves so  
that we can understand the magnificence of Your  
Love for us as You humbled Yourself and gave Your  
Life on the Cross that we might receive the gift of  
Eternal Glory with You. AMEN.**