



**Liturgy for Ash Wednesday
First English Lutheran Church
February 18, 2026
7:30 p.m.**

PRELUDE

“Allein zu ir, Herr Jesu Christ” - Johann Pachelbel
“O Lamb of God, Most Holy: - G.P. Telemann
“Our Father, We Have Wandered” - J.G. Walther

The liturgy for Ash Wednesday is somber and penitential. We are invited to confront two truths that we prefer to avoid: we are sinful and we are mortal. The good news is that Christ shares our mortality, bears our sin, and offers us in exchange his life.

GATHERING HYMN

“Return to God” Purple Book #921

GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. 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 congregation may sit.

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 reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

¹Blow 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.
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 51

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
²**Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.**
³For I know my offenses,
and my sin is ever before me.
⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right in your
judgment.**
⁵Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my mother's womb.
⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**
⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.
⁸**Let me hear joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**
⁹Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my wickedness.
¹⁰**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**
¹¹Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
¹²**Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**
¹³Let me teach your ways to offenders,
and sinners shall be restored to you.
¹⁴**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**
¹⁵O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
¹⁶**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.
You are not pleased with burnt offering.**
¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

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.

^{20b}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, riots, 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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The congregation may stand.

LENTEN ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

GOSPEL Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew, the sixth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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:] ¹“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.

²“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. 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.

⁵“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. 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.

¹⁶“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. 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 treasures 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.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

The congregation may sit.

SERMON

The congregation may stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Our Father We Have Wandered”

Red Book #606

INVITATION TO LENT

page 252 in the front of the red book

CONFESSION OF SIN

page 252 in the front of the red book

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those who desire to receive ashes may come forward and kneel or stand at the altar rail, returning to their seats by the side aisle. After all have received ashes, the congregation may kneel.

CONCLUDING DIALOGUE

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.

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.

PRAYERS

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

The congregation may kneel or sit.

After each petition, the assisting minister bids:

Hear us O God,

The congregation responds:

Your mercy is great.

The presiding minister concludes:

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

The congregation may stand.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The congregation may share a sign of Christ's peace and then sit.

ORGAN OFFERTORY

“Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire”

- Paul Bouman

The congregation may stand.

CHOIR ANTHEM

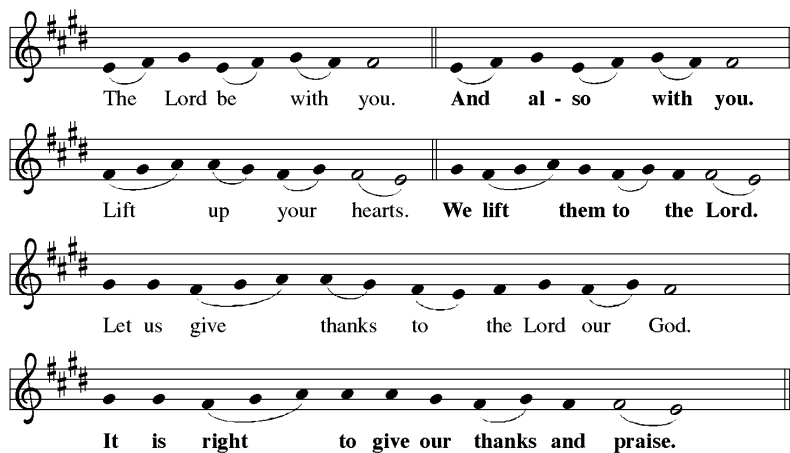
“Look at Him”

- Robin Mcgee, ASCAP
David Lantz III, *arr.*

OFFERING PRAYER *led by the assisting minister*

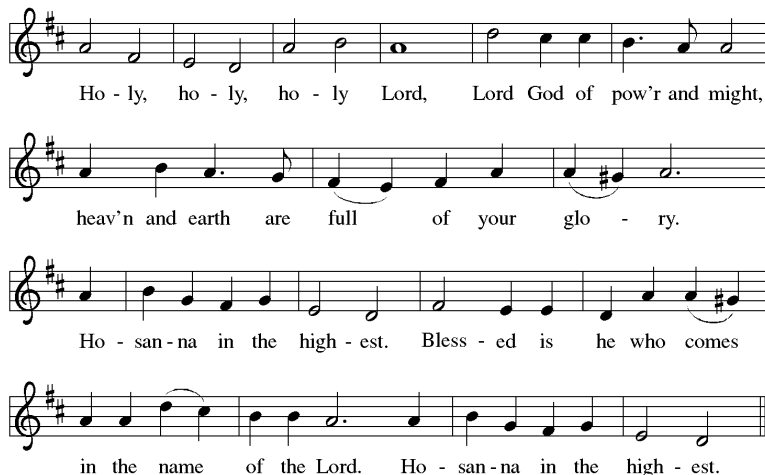
O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.
Through these gifts of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe...With this bread and cup, we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

O God of resurrection and new life:
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Bless this feast.

Grace our table with your presence.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.

Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.

Breathe new life into us.

Send us forth,

burning with justice, peace, and love.

Come, Holy Spirit.

The prayers conclude:

We praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever,

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

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,

forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on him in your hearts with thanksgiving.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

SHARING OF THE SACRAMENT

All are welcome to Holy Communion this evening. Lutherans believe that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine. The ushers will invite you forward to receive. Gluten free wafers are available; please let the pastor know if you wish to receive them. If you are able to receive either bread or wine (but not both), please know that you still receive the full communion.

HYMN DURING COMMUNION

“Chief of Sinners Though I Be”

Red Book #609

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION *led by the assisting minister*

Let us pray. Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew in us 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, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BLESSING

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

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

“On My Heart Imprint Your Image”

Red Book #811

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.

POSTLUDE

“Jesus, I Will Ponder Now”

- J.G. Walther

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Rev. Kimberly van Driel

Jim Cunningham

Sharon Heist Miller

Chuck McMichael

Marlin Boltz

Gracie Love

Harry Cunningham

Kevin Mathias

Susan Farrell

Roxanne Glagola

Presiding Minister

Assisting Minister

Communion Assistant

Reader

AV Assisting Minister

PowerPoint Assisting Minister

Sr. Choir Director

Organist

Usher

Altar Guild