

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

ASH WEDNESDAY



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022

6 P.M.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.

The sanctuary is darkened to set the Lenten mood of somberness and solemnness.



+ GATHERING +

The assembly gathers in silence and then stands to pray Psalm 51.



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

C Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.

L For I know my offenses,
and my sin is ever before me.

C 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.

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

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

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

C ⁸Let me hear | joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.

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

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

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

C ¹²Restore to me the joy of | your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.

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

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

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

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

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

C **Amen.**

GREETING

P The grace of Jesus Christ our Savior, the reconciling love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**



PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.

C **Amen.**

We sit.



+WORD+

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 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?'"

L Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

C Thanks be to God.

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.

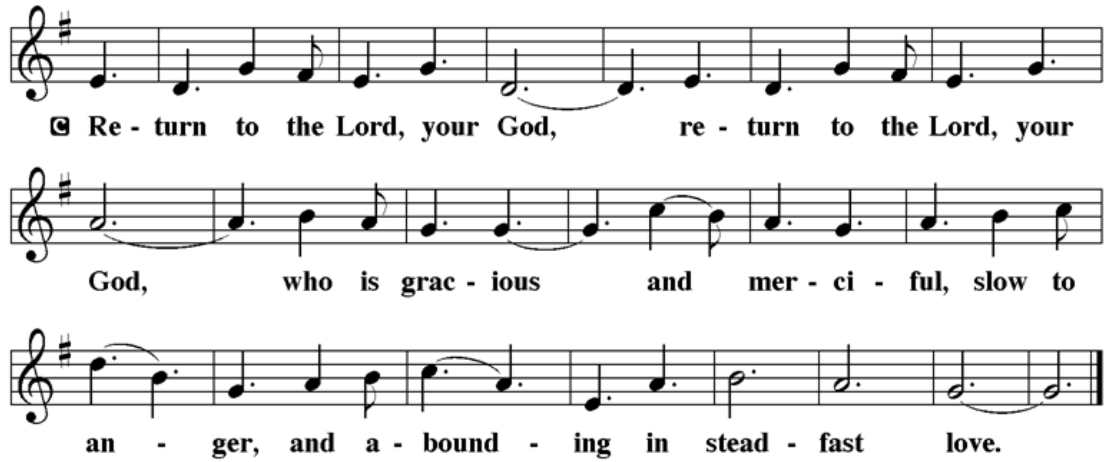
^{5: 20b}We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. ^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, "At an acceptable 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.

L Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

C Thanks be to God.

We stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



☩ Re - turn to the Lord, your God, re - turn to the Lord, your
God, who is grac - ious and mer - ci - ful, slow to
an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

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.

P The holy gospel according to Matthew, the sixth chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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. ²So 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. ⁵And 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. ¹⁶And 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.

¹⁹Do 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.

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

We sit.

ASH WEDNESDAY MEDITATION

Silence is kept for reflection.

We stand.

SERMON HYMN

319

O Lord, throughout These Forty Days

1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days you
 2 You strove with Sa - tan, and you won; your
 3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet you prayed and
 4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, and









prayed and kept the fast; in - spire re - pen - tance
 faith - ful - ness en - dured; lend us your nerve, your
 fixed your mind a - bove; so teach us to de -
 all our carth - ly days, that when the fi - nal

for our sin, and free us from our past.
 skill and trust in God's e - ter - nal word.
 ny our - selves that we may know God's love.
 Eas - ter dawns, we join in heav - en's praise.







Text: based on Claudia F. Hemaman, 1838-1898; para. Gilbert E. Doan Jr., b. 1930
 Music: CONSOLATION, A. Davison, *Kentucky Harmony*, 1816; arr. Theodore A. Beck, 1929-2003
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
 Arr. © 1969 Concordia Publishing House.

We sit.

GREAT LITANY OF CONFESSION

<p>Leader</p>  <p>Lord, have mer - cy.</p>	<p>Assembly</p>  <p>Lord, have mer - cy.</p>
 <p>Christ, have mer - cy.</p>	 <p>Christ, have mer - cy.</p>
 <p>Lord, have mer - cy.</p>	 <p>Lord, have mer - cy.</p>
 <p>O Christ, hear us.</p>	 <p>In mer - cy hear us.</p>

P Most holy and merciful God,
 C 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.

 <p>God, the Father in God, the Son, redeemer of the God, the Holy Holy Trinity, one</p>	 <p>heaven, world, Spirit, God,</p>	<p>have mer - cy on us. have mer - cy on us. have mer - cy on us. have mer - cy on us.</p>
 <p>Be grac - ious to us.</p>	 <p>Spare us, good Lord.</p>	
 <p>Be grac - ious to us.</p>	 <p>Spare us, good Lord.</p>	

P Our past unfaithfulness,
the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives,

C we confess to you.

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

C we confess to you.

P Our negligence in prayer and worship,
and our failure to share the faith that is in us,

C we confess to you.

P Our neglect of human need and suffering,
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

C we confess to you.

P Our false judgments,
our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors,
and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

C we confess to you.

P Our waste and pollution of your creation,
and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

C we confess to you.

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

C We implore you to hear us, good Lord.



IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those wishing to receive the imposition of ashes may kneel or stand around the altar as the choir sings.

ANTHEM *Dust and Ashes* -Haas

1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,
 2 Bless so - journ - ers and pil - grims who share this wind - ing way;
 3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.

the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.
 your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus - tains the day.
 We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow,

The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun - tain round,
 We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;
 but wait - ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.

then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.
 to - geth - er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.
 Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

W Text: Sylvia G. Danstan, 1955-1993
 Music: LLANGLOFAN, Welsh tune, 19th cent.
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We stand.

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

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

P 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.

C **Amen.**



+ MEAL +

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, heav - en 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. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P 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.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

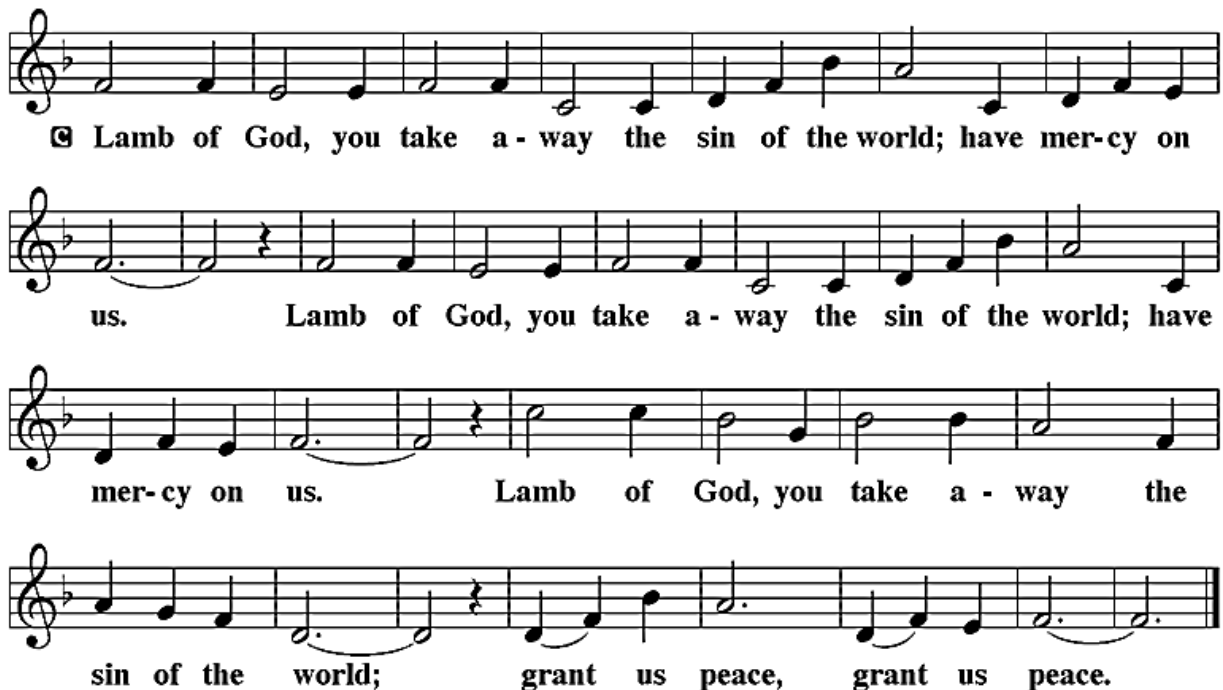
C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Here is food and drink for the journey. Take and be filled

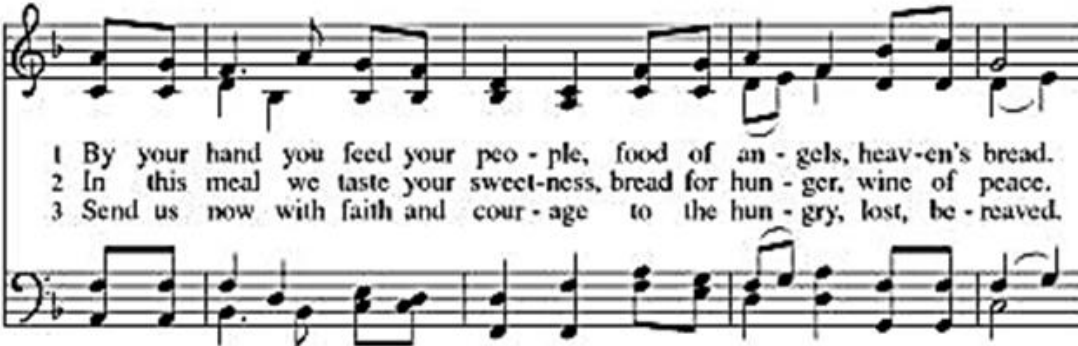
We sit.

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.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

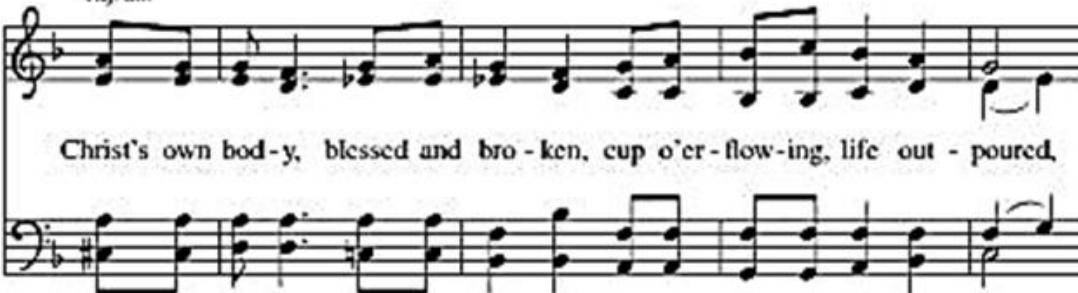


1 By your hand you feed your peo - ple, food of an - gels, heav-en's bread.
 2 In this meal we taste your sweet-ness, bread for hun - ger, wine of peace.
 3 Send us now with faith and cour-age to the hun - gry, lost, be - reaved.

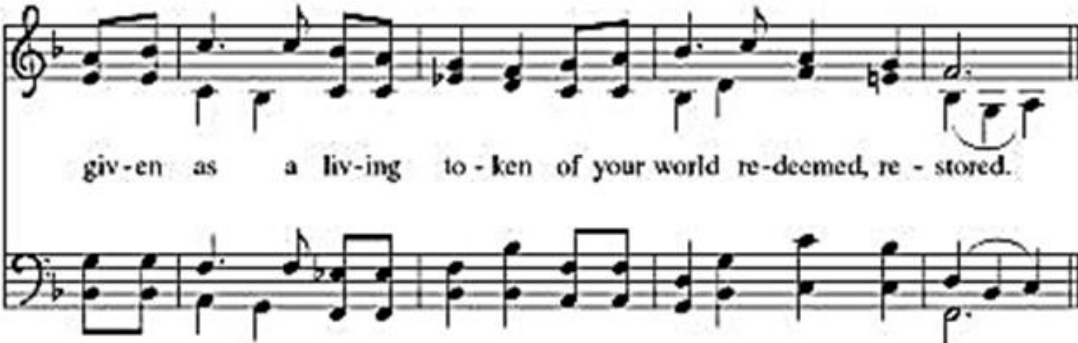


For these gifts we did not la - bor, by your grace have we been fed:
 Ho - ly word and ho - ly wis - dom sat - is - fy our deep - est needs.
 In our liv - ing and our dy - ing, we be - come what we re - ceive:

Refrain



Christ's own bod - y, blessed and bro - ken, cup o'er - flow - ing, life out - poured,



giv - en as a liv - ing to - ken of your world re - deemed, re - stored.

We stand.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

+ SENDING +

CLOSING HYMN **325** *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me*

1 I want Je - sus to walk with me;
 2 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me; walk with
 3 When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

me: I want Je - sus to walk with me;
 in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me; walk with
 when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

me: all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,
 when my heart is al - most break - ing,
 when my head is bowed in sor - row,

Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
 Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me, walk with me.
 Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

BLESSING

P You are children of God, anointed with the oil of gladness and strengthened for the journey. Almighty God, motherly, majestic, and mighty, ✝ bless you this day and always.

C **Amen.**

✝ ✝ ✝

Please leave contribution to God's glory in the narthex.

✝ *All are invited to remain seated for silent prayer and meditation.* ✝

Serving tonight:

Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Presiding

Katharine Gossman, Music Director

Beth Alexander, Assisting Minister and Altar Guild

Ron Hartung, Lector