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Saint James Lutheran Church



A Parish of the North Carolina Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



"Growing in Christ Through Worship, Learning, Fellowship, and Service"

FEBRUARY 26, 2020
12:00 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.

HOLY COMMUNION ASH WEDNESDAY

OPENING RECITATIVE AND ARIA

From *Elijah*, Op. 70 Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809 - 1847)
Dr. Brian Arreola, tenor

Ye people, rend your hearts, and not your garments, for your transgressions the prophet Elijah hath sealed the heavens through the word of God. I therefore say to you: Forsake your idols, return to God; for he is slow to anger, and merciful, and kind, and gracious, and grieveth that he must punish.

"If with all your hearts ye truly seek me, ye shall ever surely find me." Thus saith our God. Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might even come before his presence!

EXHORTATION

Brothers and sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of his creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn to him and live. As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love--the discipline of Lent--help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

Silence is held for reflection and self-examination before the confession.

THE CONFESSION

Most holy and merciful Father:

We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own 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, Lord.

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, Lord.

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

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

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

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,
we confess to you, Lord.

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

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 judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, 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.
Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Blessed are you, God of all creation. You are eternal, we are mortal, formed from the dust of the earth. As we receive these ashes, make them be for us a sign of repentance and returning to you. Breathe into us again the breath of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

Those who desire to receive ashes may come forward and kneel before the altar.

The Minister applies ashes to the forehead of each person with the words:

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

ABSOLUTION

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 Lord,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore we implore him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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 obtain from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

THE HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21*

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the sixth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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. ⁷"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.

SERMON

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

HOLY COMMUNION

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 God thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The Minister continues with the Words of Institution

LORD'S PRAYER

And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold 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.

All baptized Christians are welcome to Holy Communion at Saint James. If you desire to receive Communion at the altar, please proceed to the altar and kneel at the communion rail. Communion is administered by intinction. Take the wafer from the assistant then dip it in the wine. Communion will be brought to persons in the pews who are unable to come forward. Please advise an usher if you wish the pastor to do so.

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION

Ex more docti mystico

Gerald Near (b. 1942)

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

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

POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER

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, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May the blessing of God Almighty, Father, ✠Son, and Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

Lord Jesus, Think on Me

LBW 309

DISMISSAL

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CLOSING VOLUNTARY

Jesu, meine Freude, BWV 610

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)