



The Voice

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

February 2026



Lutheran Liturgical Practices During Lent by Mr. Jonathan Swett

Each year, the Christian church embarks on a forty-day journey leading up to Easter, known as the season of Lent. When discussing Lenten liturgical practices of Lutherans, I believe one can distinguish three different categories into which each practice can be placed: Visual, Historical/Traditional, and Emotional/Spiritual. It can be debated; however, that some of the practices fall into multiple categories—and rightfully so.

The first visual component is that of the color purple that adorns the Lord's house in various manners throughout the season of Lent. The dye to make purple was very difficult to source in ancient times, thus attributed to royalty, and adorned the Christ only once—as He was mocked and ridiculed as the “King of the Jews” prior to His gruesome crucifixion. This deep hue has come to represent solemnity, penitence, and prayer as God's people meditate on the agony His Son willingly endured. Twice in the Lenten season, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the Lord's house may be adorned with the color black which represents the absence of light and the curse of sin and darkness which fell over creation that only the death of the perfect Son of God could abolish.

The second visual component is that of the sign of the cross applied upon the repentant Christian's forehead during the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday. Typically utilizing ash created by the burning of palms from the previous Palm Sunday, this symbolic rite is a reminder of the sign of the cross that was placed on us in our Baptisms, our mortality (“Remember: you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”), and the filth of our sin that has been washed clean by the blood of Jesus.

A historical/traditional component of the Lenten season is the omission of the word “Alleluia” from the liturgy and hymnody as well as an omission of the Hymn of Praise. “Alleluia”—a Hebrew word meaning “Praise the Lord”—returns full-voice in the glorious celebration of Easter morning. A long-standing practice at Our Savior in Hartland is the singing of a remarkably beautiful setting of “Farewell to Alleluia” by Olin Jones. As the conclusion to the Transfiguration of Our Lord service, the anthem wafts from the mouths of the *Cantate* choir in the balcony at the rear of the nave and greets the ears of the congregants below as they kneel in solemn reverence and meditation—marking a poignant transition into the holy time of Lent/Easter.

A historic service, the Great Vigil of Easter, on the eve of Easter Sunday, had fallen out of common practice, yet is recently experiencing a resurgence. The service—which is centered on the themes of darkness to light, and God's rescue of His people—includes the Services of Light (including the Kindling of a New Fire), the Word, Holy Baptism, and the Holy Eucharist.

As mentioned earlier, the emotional/spiritual character of the Lenten season is one of penitence. Connected to the Great Vigil of Easter; however, the season of Lent may also be one of preparation, as catechumens who had been prepared, were appointed to be baptized during the Service of Holy Baptism in the Easter Vigil service.

The practice of fasting (or “giving something up”) during Lent is not required for Lutherans because it is not commanded in Holy Scripture. Rather, as a matter of Christian freedom, starving oneself of a pleasure of the flesh is a way to remember daily the great sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to pay for the world’s sin.

You may already be well-along your Lenten journey. May it be a blessing to you as you again experience the depth of Jesus’ obedience and the great love of God to redeem a world so desperately in need of salvation.

Jonathan A. Swett is Kantor of Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church and School, Hartland, Mich. Bibliography: Douglas K. Escue, “Colors of the Liturgical Season,” *Lutheran Worship Notes*, Issue 29 (1994). Thoma, Christopher. Kids in the Divine Service. St. Louis: Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2000.



Serving This Month

February 1st

Pastor Gary Stolle
Reader: Fred Reifsteck
Organist: Doris Foley
Acolyte: April Causey
Elder: God’s Faithful Servant

February 8th

Pastor Wayne Persich
Lay Reader: Kirsten Englund
Organist: Doris Foley
Acolyte: April Causey
Elder: God’s Faithful Servant

February 15th

Pastor Gary Stolle
Lay Reader: Aaron Kirchhoff
Organist: Doris Foley
Acolyte: April Causey
Elder: God’s Faithful Servant

February 18th

Pastor Gary Stolle
Organist: Doris Foley
Acolyte: God’s Faithful Servant
Elder: God’s Faithful Servant

February 22nd

Pastor Wayne Persich
Lay Reader: Dan Martin
Organist: Doris Foley
Acolyte: April Causey
Elder: God’s Faithful Servant

Altar Guild for February 2026

Sharon Bahl & Kris Rosenberg

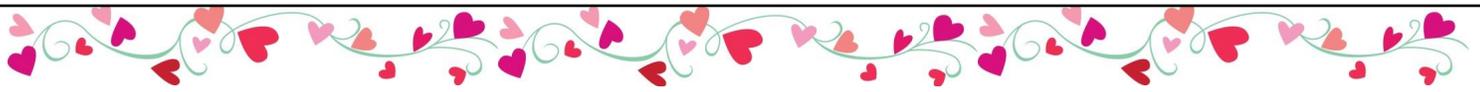


February Birthdays: 3-Charlotte Reifsteck; 11-Janice Tann; 25-Allison Brumfield; 27-Kenny Ward.

February Wedding Anniversaries: 9-[Don Smith] & Phyllis Bredehoft

If anyone has been missed let the office know.

The Lord bless you, and keep you; The Lord make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26



Love is patient, Love is kind.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4



“CROSSWORDS FROM CHRIST”

2026 Lenten Midweek Service Schedule

Wednesday Schedule: 4:00p.m. 1st Worship Service
5:00-6:00 p.m. Meal; 6:30p.m. 2nd Worship Service

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
February 18-Ash Wednesday	St. Paul
February 25	Ascension
March 4	Messiah
March 11	St. Paul
March 18	Ascension
March 25	Messiah

Living in Joy: Joy in God’s Love



Mustard Seed

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Joy in God’s Love

In the Word

We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Of the Word

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote the famous words, “How do I love thee? Let me count the ways ...” Yet when God looked at us, how many ways could He have counted? He saw our sins ... *red like crimson* ... (Isaiah 1:18b). And He loved us anyway!

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). When He looks at us now — through the cross of Jesus — God sees us as the people He designed us to be: forgiven, loving, serving people. Though we sin daily, God’s love and forgiveness are always available to us. His love never fails, and He never withholds forgiveness from the repentant sinner. In Him we have comfort and joy.

Walking with my Lord

Thank You, Lord, for Your unconditional love. I could not have loved You first, and I could not have brought myself to You. Help me to respond to the love You have given me by sharing it with those whose lives touch mine. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



FEBRUARY

2026

St. Paul's Lutheran Church LCMS
 17200 E. 39th Street Independence, MO 64055
Church Office Number: (816) 373-5290
Church Secretary: Becky Reynolds secretary172stpl@comcast.net
Web Address: <https://stpaulsindependence.org/>

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship Service 9am Voter's Meeting 10:15am	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Worship Service w/communion 9am	9	10 Prayer Shawl 12:30pm	11	12	13	14
15 Worship Service 9am	16	17	18 4pm Ash Wednesday service @ St. Paul's 5-6pm meal 6:30pm service	19	20	21
22 Worship Service w/communion 9am	23	24 Prayer Shawl 12:30pm	25 4pm Lent #2 service at Ascension 5-6pm meal 6:30pm service	26	27	28



but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

