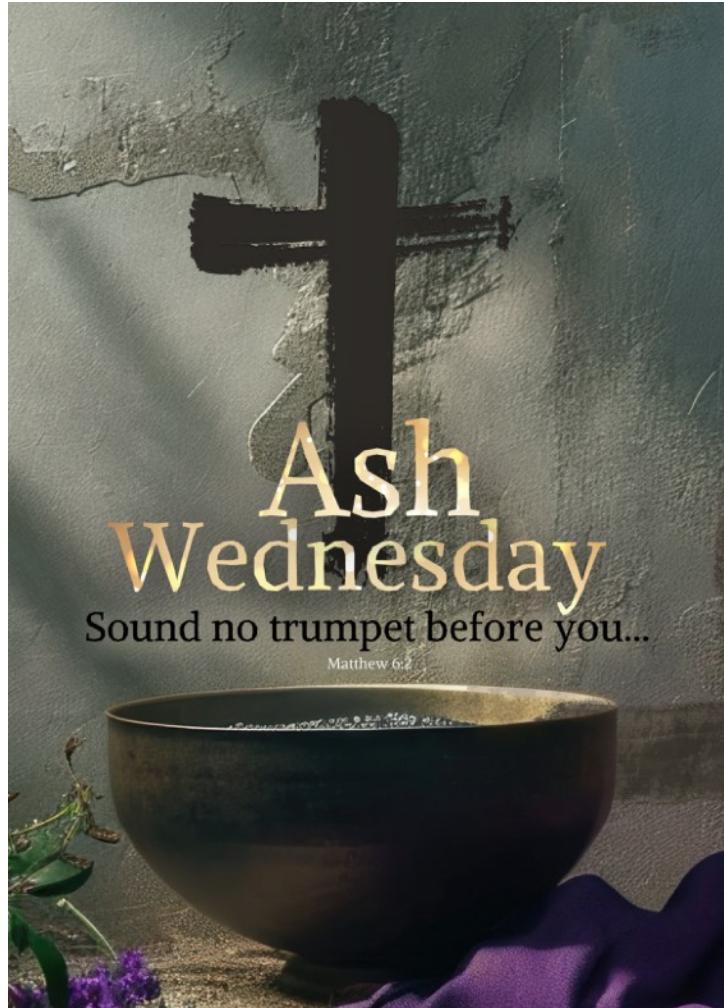


Ash Wednesday



February 18, 2026

St. John's Lutheran Church
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Ringing of the Bell

P: Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

Silence for reflection

Litany for Ash Wednesday

P: O Lord,	C: have mercy.
P: O Christ,	C: have mercy.
P: O Lord,	C: have mercy.
P: O Christ,	C: hear us.
P: God the Father in heaven,	C: have mercy.
P: God the Son, Redeemer of the world,	C: have mercy.
P: God the Holy Spirit,	C: have mercy.
P: Be gracious to us.	C: Spare us, good Lord.
P: Be gracious to us.	C: Help us, good Lord.

The Imposition of Ashes

P: Ashes symbolize our repentant state before God. We confess that we are sinners, and so we are marked for death by the ashes. We hear the ancient curse: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." But the ashes that mark us are in the shape of the cross. Death will not be our end. Our sins have been atoned for by the precious blood of Jesus. We shall rise in our bodies just as He is risen in His.

The ashes are made from palm branches. We are reminded that Jesus' journey to the cross was for us. We are marked with His cross to remind us that we have been claimed as His own, we have been purchased at a price, and so He has marked us for resurrection and eternal life.

Coming forward or not is a matter of personal piety. You may remain in your seat in prayer, or come forward for the imposition of ashes.

The pastor and assistant receive ashes first, followed by the congregation. The following hymn is sung during the imposition of ashes.

TLH 172 "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"

**O sacred Head, now wounded, With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded With thorns, Thine only crown.
O sacred Head, what glory, What bliss, till now was Thine!
Yet, tho' despised and gory, I joy to call Thee mine.**

**Men mock and taunt and jeer Thee, Thou noble countenance,
Though mighty worlds shall fear Thee And flee before Thy glance.
How art thou pale with anguish, With sorn abuse and scorn!
How doth Thy visage languish That once was bright as morn!**

Now from Thy cheeks has vanished Their color, once so fair;
From Thy red lips is banished The splendor that was there.
Grim Death, with cru-el rigor, Hath robbed Thee of Thy life;
Thus Thou hast lost Thy vigor, Thy strength, in this sad strife.

My burden in Thy Passion, Lord, Thou hast borne for me,
For it was my transgression Which brought this woe on Thee.
I cast me down before Thee, Wrath were my rightful lot;
Have mercy, I implore Thee; Redeemer, spurn me not!

My Shepherd, now receive me; My Guardian, own me Thine.
Great blessings Thou didst give me, O Source of gifts divine!
Thy lips have often fed me With words of truth and love,
Thy Spirit oft hath led me To heav'nly joys above.

Here I will stand beside Thee, From Thee I will not part;
O Savior, do not chide me! When breaks Thy loving heart,
When soul and body languish In death's cold, cruel grasp,
Then, in Thy deepest anguish, Thee in mine arms I'll clasp.

The joy can ne'er be spoken, Above all joys beside,
When in Thy body broken I thus with safety hide.
O Lord of life, desiring Thy glory now to see,
Beside Thy cross expiring, I'd breathe my soul to Thee.

What language shall I borrow To thank Thee, dearest Friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?
O, make me Thine forever! And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never, Outlive my love for Thee.

My Savior, be Thou near me When death is at my door;
Then let Thy presence cheer me, Forsake me nevermore!
When soul and body languish, Oh, leave me not alone,
But take away mine anguish By virtue of Thine own!

Be Thou my Consolation, My Shield when I must die;
Remind me of Thy Passion When my last hour draws nigh.
Mine eyes shall then behold Thee, Upon Thy cross shall dwell,
My heart by faith enfold Thee. Who dieth thus dies well! Amen.

Corporate Confession and Absolution

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

C: Amen.

P: I will go to the altar of God,

C: to God my exceeding joy.

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C: who made heaven and earth.

Confessional Address

P: Beloved in the Lord...May the almighty and merciful God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by His Holy Spirit, accomplish this in us.

C: Amen.

P: Having heard the Word of God, let us confess our sins to Him, imploring Him for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto Thee all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended Thee and justly deserved Thy temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray Thee of Thy boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

P: God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith.

C: Amen.

P: Do you believe that the forgiveness I speak is not my forgiveness but God's?

C: Yes.

P: Let it be done for you as you believe.

In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

C: Amen.

P: Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it. Go in peace.

C: Amen.

Introit *Psalm 51:1-3, 10-12; antiphon: v. 17*

P: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

C: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

P: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

**C: For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.**

P: Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

**C: Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

P: Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Gloria Patri: TLH Page 16 [Sung]

**C: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

The Kyrie: TLH Page 17 [Sung]

C: Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

During Lent, the Gloria in Excelsis is omitted

Salutation and Collect*TLH Page 19***P: The Lord be with you!****C: And with thy spirit!**

(prayed together) - Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Old Testament Reading - Joel 2:12-19

¹²“Yet even now,” declares the Lord,

“return to me with all your heart,

with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³and rend your hearts and not your garments.”

Return to the Lord, your God,

for he is gracious and merciful,

slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;

and he relents over disaster.

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;

consecrate a fast;

call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶gather the people.

Consecrate the congregation;

assemble the elders;

gather the children,

even nursing infants.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,

and the bride her chamber.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar

let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep

and say, “Spare your people, O Lord,

and make not your heritage a reproach,

a byword among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples,

‘Where is their God?’”

¹⁸Then the Lord became jealous for his land

and had pity on his people.

¹⁹The Lord answered and said to his people,

“Behold, I am sending to you

grain, wine, and oil,

and you will be satisfied;

and I will no more make you

a reproach among the nations.”

Epistle Reading – 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

We implore 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.

¹Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,

and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

Gradual *(During Lent, the Hallelujah is omitted)*

[O come, let us fix our eyes on] Jesus,
the founder and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,
and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

¹[Jesus said:] “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

²“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when 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 when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel ended, the congregation sings: **C: PRAISE BE TO THEE, O CHRIST!**

The Nicene Creed

TLH Page 22

Sermon Hymn TLH 329 "From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee"

From depths of woe I cry to Thee, Lord, hear me, I implore Thee.
Bend down Thy gracious ear to me, My prayer let come before Thee.
If Thou rememberest each misdeed, If each should have its rightful meed,
Who may abide Thy presence?

Thy love and grace alone avail To blot out my transgression;
The best and holiest deeds must fail To break sin's dread oppression.
Before Thee none can boasting stand, But all must fear Thy strict demand
And live alone by mercy.

Therefore my hope is in the Lord And not in mine own merit;
It rests upon His faithful Word To them of contrite spirit
That He is merciful and just; This is my comfort and my trust.
His help I wait with patience.

And though it tarry till the night And till the morning waken,
My heart shall never doubt His might Nor count itself forsaken.
Do thus, O ye of Israel's seed, Ye of the Spirit born indeed;
Wait for your God's appearing.

Though great our sins and sore our woes, His grace much more aboundeth;
His helping love no limit knows, Our utmost need it soundeth.
Our shepherd good and true is He, Who will at last His Israel free
From all their sin and sorrow. Amen.

The Sermon

Offertory

TLH Pages 22-23

Prayers

ORDER OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Preface: *TLH Page 24 [Responses Sung]*

P: The Lord be with you. C: And with thy spirit.
P: Lift up your hearts. C: We lift them up unto the Lord.
P: Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God. C: It is meet and right so to do.
P: It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to
Thee, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God ... therefore with angels and archangels and
with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising
Thee and saying:

The Sanctus: *TLH Page 26 [Sung]*

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory;
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He, Blessed is He,
Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.

The Lord's Prayer: TLH Page 27

**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;
[Sung] For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

The Words of Institution: TLH Page 27

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me."

After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

The Pax Domini: TLH Page 27

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: [Sung] A - - - men.

The Agnus Dei: TLH Page 28 [Sung]

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, Grant us Thy peace.

A - - - men.

The Distribution

(We invite those who are communicant members of the LC-MS to commune with us.)

Distribution Hymns TLH 151 "Christ, the Life of All the Living"

**Christ, the Life of all the living, Christ, the Death of death, our foe,
Who, Thysel for me once giving To the darkest depths of woe,--
Thro' thy suff'rings, death, and merit I eternal life inherit:
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

**Thou, ah! Thou, hast taken on Thee Bonds and stripes, a cruel rod;
Pain and scorn were heaped upon Thee, O Thou sinless Son of God!
Thus didst Thou my soul deliver From the bonds of sin forever.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

**Thou hast borne the smiting only That my wounds might all be whole;
Thou hast suffered, sad and lonely, Rest to give my weary soul;
Yea, the curse of God enduring, Blessing unto me securing.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

**Heartless scoffers did surround Thee, Treating Thee with shameful scorn
And with piercing thorns they crowned Thee. All disgrace Thou, Lord, hast borne
That as Thine Thou mightest own me And with heavenly glory crown me.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

Thou hast suffered men to bruise Thee That from pain I might be free;
Falsely did Thy foes accuse Thee,--Thence I gain security;
Comfortless Thy soul did languish Me to comfort in my anguish.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Thou hast suffered great affliction And hast borne it patiently,
Even death by crucifixion, Fully to atone for me;
Thou didst choose to be tormented That my doom should be prevented.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Then, for all that wrought my pardon, For Thy sorrows deep and sore,
For Thine anguish in the Garden, I will thank Thee evermore,
Thank Thee for Thy groaning, sighing, For Thy bleeding and Thy dying,
For that last triumphant cry, And shall praise Thee, Lord, on high. Amen.

TLH 522 "When, in the Hour of Utmost Need"

When in the hour of utmost need We know not where to look for aid;
When days and nights of anxious thought Nor help nor counsel yet have brought,

Then this our comfort is alone, That we may meet before Thy throne
And cry, O faithful God, to Thee For rescue from our misery;

To Thee may raise our hearts and eyes, Repenting sore with bitter sighs,
And seek Thy pardon for our sin And respite from our griefs within.

For Thou hast promised graciously To hear all those who cry to Thee
Through Him whose name alone is great, Our Savior and our Advocate.

And thus we come, O God, today And all our woes before Thee lay;
For sorely tried, cast down, we stand, Perplexed by fears on every hand.

Ah! hide not for our sins Thy face, Absolve us through Thy boundless grace,
Be with us in our anguish still, Free us at last from every ill,

That so with all our hearts we may To Thee our glad thanksgiving pay,
Then walk obedient to Thy Word And now and ever praise Thee, Lord. Amen.

Nunc Dimittis

TLH Pages 29-30 [Sung]

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy Word,
For mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation:
Which Thou hast prepared before the Face of all people,
a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of Thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Thanksgiving: *TLH Page 30*

P: Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.

C: *[Sung]* And His mercy endureth forever.

The Thanksgiving Prayer: *TLH Pages 30-31*

P: ...through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one
God, world without end.

C: *[Sung]* A- - - - men.

The Benedicamus: TLH Page 31

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *[Sung]* And with thy spirit.

P: Bless we the Lord.

C: *[Sung]* Thanks be to God.

The Benediction: TLH Page 31

P: The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

C: *[Sung]* Amen, Amen, Amen!

Closing Hymn TLH 146 "Lamb of God, Pure and Holy"

**Lamb of God, pure and holy, Who on the cross didst suffer,
Ever patient and lowly, Thyself to scorn didst offer.
All sins Thou borest for us, Else had despair reigned o'er us:
Have mercy on us, O Jesus! O, Jesus!**

**Lamb of God, pure and holy, Who on the cross didst suffer,
Ever patient and lowly, Thyself to scorn didst offer.
All sins Thou borest for us, Else had despair reigned o'er us:
Have mercy on us, O Jesus! O, Jesus!**

**Lamb of God, pure and holy, Who on the cross didst suffer,
Ever patient and lowly, Thyself to scorn didst offer.
All sins Thou borest for us, Else had despair reigned o'er us:
Thy peace be with us, O Jesus! O, Jesus! Amen.**

Silent Prayer**Announcements*****Have A Blessed Week!***

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Cover pic artwork: Allan Forbis

The Lutheran Hymnal: St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, © 1941.

Hymn #172: Scripture: Isaiah 50:6; O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden; O Sacred Head, Now Wounded; Based on the Latin; Author: Bernard of Clairvoix, died 1153, asc.; Translator: Paul Gerhardt (1656); Translation: Composite; Tune: Herzlich Tut Mich; Composer: Hans L. Hassler (1601).

Hymn #329: Scripture: Psalm 130; Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu dir; From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee; Author: Martin Luther; Translator: Catherine Winkworth (1863, alt.); Tune: Aus tiefer Not; Source: Johann Walther's "Gesangbuechlein"; Wittenberg, 1524.

Hymn # 151: Scripture: Matthew 26:64-67; Jesu, meines Lebens Leben; Christ The Life Of All The Living; Author: Ernst C. Homburg (1659 ab.); Translator: Catherine Winkworth (1863, alt.); Tune: Jesu Meines Lebens Leben; Source: "Kirchengesangbuch," Darmstadt, 1687.

Hymn #522: Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:12; Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein; When in the Hour of Utmost Need; Author: Paul Eber (1560); Translator: Catherine Winkworth (1858, alt.); Tune: Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten; Source: "Genevan Psalter", 1547.

Hymn #146: Scripture: John 1:29; O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig; Lamb Of God Pure And Holy; Author: Nikolaus Decius (1531); Translator: Composite; Tune: O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig; Source: "Christl. KirchhenOrdnung" Erfurt, 1542.

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