



DYING
HIS DEATH
LIVING
HIS LIFE

ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 18TH, 2026

Dying His Death
Living His Life

Feb. 18th, 2026
Noon & 7 PM Service

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Psalm 51:1

Prelude

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Choir (7 PM Service)

Savior, When in Dust to Thee

LSB 419

Savior, when in dust to Thee
Low we bow the_adoring knee;
When, repentant, to the skies
Scarce we lift our weeping eyes;
O, by all Thy pains and woe
Suffered once for us below,
Bending from Thy throne on high,
Hear our penitential cry!

By Thy helpless infant years,
By Thy life of want and tears,
By Thy days of deep distress
In the savage wilderness,
By the dread, mysterious hour
Of the_insulting tempter's pow'r,
Turn, O turn a fav'ring eye;
Hear our penitential cry!

By Thine hour of dire despair,
By Thine agony of prayer,
By the cross, the nail, the thorn,
Piercing spear, and torturing scorn,
By the gloom that veiled the skies
O'er the dreadful sacrifice,
Listen to our humble sigh;
Hear our penitential cry!

By Thy deep expiring groan,
By the sad sepulchral stone,
By the vault whose dark abode
Held in vain the rising God,
O, from earth to heav'n restored,
Mighty, reascended Lord,
Bending from Thy throne on high,
Hear our penitential cry!

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Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession and Absolution

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. David the psalmist writes, “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psalm 32:1). In humble repentance, we seek the blessing of God and forgiveness for our sins.

Almighty God, we confess that we have turned away from your Word and from your will for our lives. Instead of following your ways, we listen to the temptations of the world around us and seek to live according to our own sinful desires. We do not love others as we should. Have mercy on us, and forgive our sins for Jesus’ sake. Create in us new hearts and willing spirits to glorify you and serve others in your name.

The psalmist writes, “I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my sins to the Lord,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin” (Psalm 32:5). God has had mercy on us, sending his Son to suffer the penalty of death that we deserved for our sins and forgiving us for Jesus’ sake. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Service of the Word

Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, today we begin the season of Lent and receive the mark of ashes, a reminder that we are sinners who need you, our Savior. We will follow in your steps as you take up your path to the cross. Lead us in the power of the Holy Spirit to walk in love as you walked. It was love that led you to die on the cross for our sins. It is love that leads us to serve as you served and to forgive as we have been forgiven. Hear our prayer and accept our grateful praise, dear Savior.

Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Psalm 51:1-12

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. ⁹ Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel**Matthew 18:21-35**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eighteenth chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?”

²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³ “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.

²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’

²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’

²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’

³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’

³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.

³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Jesus Sinners Doth Receive

LSB 974 (vs. 1-4)

Jesus sinners doth receive;
Oh, may all this saying ponder
Who in sin's delusions live
And from God and heaven wander!
Here is hope for all who grieve:
Jesus sinners doth receive.

We deserve but grief and shame,
Yet His words, rich grace revealing,
Pardon, peace, and life proclaim;
Here our ills have perfect healing.
Firmly in these words believe:
Jesus sinners doth receive.

Sheep that from the fold did stray
No true shepherd e'er forsaketh;
Weary souls that lost their way
Christ, the Shepherd, gently taketh
In His arms that they may live:
Jesus sinners doth receive.

I, a sinner, come to Thee
With a penitent confession.
Savior, mercy show to me;
Grant for all my sins remission.
Let these words my soul relieve:
Jesus sinners doth receive.

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Message

Vicar Caleb Gustafson

Prayers of the Church

Lord Jesus, by your death and resurrection, we were delivered from Satan's domain of darkness and brought into your kingdom. In you we have forgiveness for our sins. Lord, create in each of us a clean heart.

Restore to us the joy of the salvation that we have through faith in your name.

Lord Jesus, forgive us when we keep count of the wrongs of others. Teach us to forgive others as we have been forgiven, knowing that because of your suffering and death, our sins have been removed forever from your sight. Lord, create in each of us a clean heart.

Restore to us the joy of the salvation that we have through faith in your name.

Lord Jesus, lead us to walk in love as you walked. Teach us to bear the burdens of others and to share with them the forgiveness that you show to us. As we encounter those who have gone astray from your Word and ways, lead us to reach out to them in love and kindness, reflecting your love and grace. Lord, create in each of us a clean heart.

Restore to us the joy of the salvation that we have through faith in your name.

Lord Jesus, bless those who are hurting and those who are suffering from illness, grief and sorrow. Help us to serve them in love, sharing with them the promises and comfort that are found in your holy Word. Lord, create in each of us a clean heart.

Restore to us the joy of the salvation that we have through faith in your name.

Lord Jesus, create in us hearts that are willing to serve, to love and to forgive, hearts that reflect the love and forgiveness that you have shown to us. Lord, create in each of us a clean heart.

Restore to us the joy of the salvation that we have through faith in your name. Amen.

Service of the Sacrament

The Words of Our Lord

The Imposition of Ashes

The ashes symbolize our mourning for our sins. The sign of the cross symbolizes cleansing and renewal and points to the gift of forgiveness that God gives in Jesus Christ.

Parishioners come forward to receive a cross of ashes on their foreheads. As you come forward to receive ashes the pastor will say,

“Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.”

The individual response is:

“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ.”

Dismissal

Blessing of God's People (Benediction)

Chief of sinners though I be,
Jesus shed His blood for me,
Died that I might live on high,
Lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine,
I am His, and He is mine.

Oh, the height of Jesus' love,
Higher than the heav'ns above,
Deeper than the depths of sea,
Lasting as eternity!
Love that found me—wondrous thought!
Found me when I sought Him not.

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Go in peace to love and
serve the Lord!
Thanks be to God!

Acknowledgments

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