

**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH PEMBROKE
ASH WEDNESDAY
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 18 2026**

GATHERING (*we gather in silence*)

GATHERING HYMN *Bless Now, O God, the Journey* (ELW 326)

1 Bless now, O God, the journey
that all your people make,
the path through noise and silence,
the way of give and take.
The trail is found in desert
and winds the mountain round,
then leads beside still waters,
the road where faith is found.

2 Bless sojourners and pilgrims
who share this winding way;
your hope burns through the terrors,
your love sustains the day.
We yearn for holy freedom
while often we are bound;
together we are seeking
the road where faith is found.

3 Divine eternal lover,
you meet us on the road.
We wait for land of promise
where milk and honey flow,
but waiting not for places,
you meet us all around.
Our covenant is written
on roads, as faith is found.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993. Text © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission. One License #A-728050.

GREETING (ELW p. 251)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

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 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.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

A reading from Joel.

¹ Blow 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—
² a 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.

¹² Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the Lord your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting from punishment.

¹⁴ Who 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?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶ gather the people.
Consecrate the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between 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?' "
Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-17

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
² Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.
³ For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.
⁴ 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.
⁵ Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.
⁶ Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.
⁷ Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.
⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; that the body you have broken may rejoice.
⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

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 sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

¹³ Let me teach your ways to offenders, and sinners shall be restored to you.

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

¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

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

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

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

^{20b} We entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1} As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ² For he says,

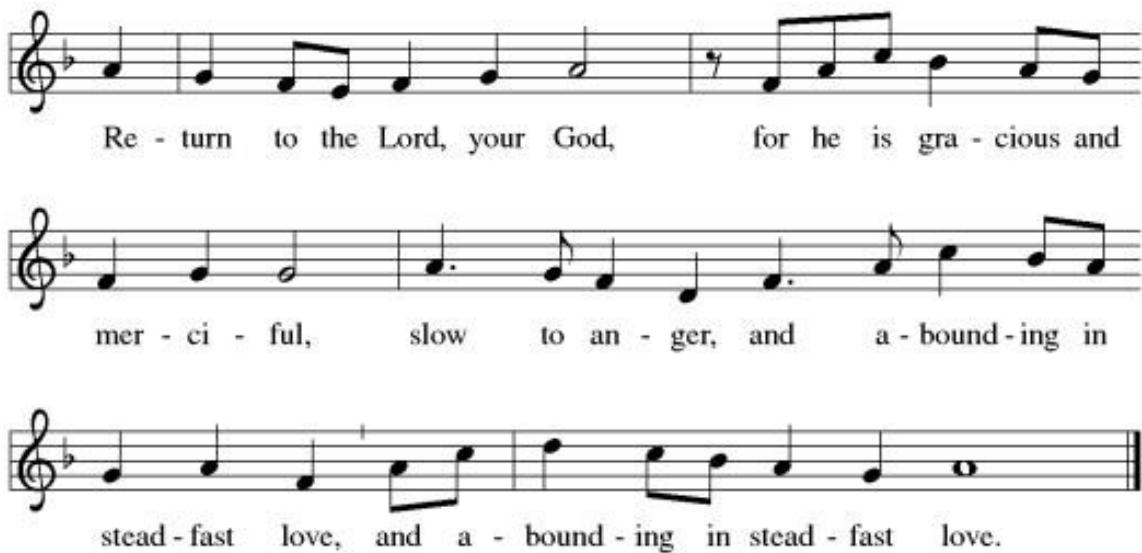
“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! ³ We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷ truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸ in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true, ⁹ as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed, ¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ “Beware of practicing your righteousness 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. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so 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. ⁶ But 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.

¹⁶ “And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so 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, ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *Savior, When in Dust to You* (ELW 601)

1 Savior, when in dust to you
low we bow in homage due;
when, repentant, to the skies
scarce we lift our weeping eyes;
oh, by all your pains and woe
suffered once for us below,
bending from your throne on high,
hear our penitential cry!

3 By your hour of dire despair,
by your 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!

2 By your helpless infant years,
by your life of want and tears,
by your days of deep distress
in the savage wilderness,
by the dread, mysterious hour
of the insulting tempter's pow'r,
turn, oh, turn a fav'ring eye;
hear our penitential cry!

4 By your deep expiring groan,
by the sad sepulchral stone,
by the vault whose dark abode
held in vain the rising God,
oh, from earth to heav'n restored,
mighty, reascended Lord,
bending from your throne on high,
hear our penitential cry!

Text : Robert Grant, 1779-1838, alt. Text : Public Domain.

INVITATION TO LENT (ELW p. 252)

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion

separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

CONFESSIO N OF SIN (ELW p. 252)

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most holy and merciful God,

**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.**

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, O God.

We have shut our ears 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, O God.

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

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

Have mercy on us, O God.

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

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

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

Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

Mixed Choir - All Things of Dust to Dust Return By Thomas H. Troeger and Thomas Tallis

IMPOSITION OF ASHES (ELW p. 254)

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.

May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

People may come forward and kneel or stand to receive the ashes.

Ministers mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:

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

After those who desire ashes have received them, all may kneel or sit, and the minister continues.

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 Savior,

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

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.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

Guide your church, O God. Accompany all Christians in this season of repentance, and renew our faith in the riches of grace you give to us in baptism. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Heal this earth, O God. Satisfy the needs of every parched place, every diverse ecosystem, every suffering creature. Though all return to dust, grant beauty and purpose to each living thing. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Restore the nations, O God. Let your healing spring up quickly across the world. Give all in authority the will to loose the bonds of injustice and let any who are oppressed go free. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Deliver your people, O God. Comfort any whose hearts are rent by grief, uphold any who are sick, bring food to those who hunger, and give housing to all without shelter. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Bless this assembly, O God. Reconcile us to one another and to you. Strengthen our resolve to fast from evil, open our hands in sharing, and quicken our prayer. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Hold us forever, O God. We thank you for all who now know their treasure in heaven, and for all who on earth proclaimed your abounding, steadfast love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

Amen.

OFFERING *God of the Fertile Fields* (ACS 1063 verses 1 and 2)

1 God of the fertile fields,
shaper of earth that yields our daily bread:
forth from your bounteous hand
come gifts your love has planned,
that all in ev'ry land
be clothed and fed.

2 We would be stewards true,
holding in trust from you all that you give;
help us in love to share,
teach us like you to care
for people ev'rywhere,
that all may live.

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OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

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 our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

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'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san - na. 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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, O God of the universe.
Your mercy is everlasting
and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.
Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.
Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.
Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness
to the land of milk and honey.
Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.
Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.
Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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.

With this bread and cup
we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

O God of resurrection and new life:
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Bless this feast.
Grace our table with your presence.
Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.
Breathe new life into us.
Send us forth,
burning with justice, peace, and love.
Come, Holy Spirit.

With your holy ones of all times and places,
with the earth and all its creatures,
with sun and moon and stars,
we praise you, O God,
blessed and holy Trinity,
now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

COMMUNION SONG

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN *Create in Me a Clean Heart* (Freylinghausen) (ELW 188)

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence,

and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of your salvation,

and uphold me with your free Spirit.

Music: J. A. Freylinghausen, 1670-1739. Text: Public Domain.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN *Come, Ye Disconsolate* (ELW 607)

1 Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;
come to the mercy-seat, fervently kneel.
Here bring your wounded hearts,
here tell your anguish;
earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot heal.

2 Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,
hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure;
here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
"Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot cure."

3 Here see the Bread of life; see waters flowing
forth from the throne of God, pure from above.
Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing
earth has no sorrow but heav'n can remove.

Text: Thomas Moore, 1776-1852, sts. 1-2; Thomas Hastings, 1784-1872, st. 3. Text: Public Domain.

PRAYER (ELW p. 254)

Let us pray. 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 (ELW p. 255)

Almighty God, Father,  Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL (ELW p. 255)

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Thanks be to God.**

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**Beginning February 25, 2026 - Soup and Sandwich dinners 5:30 pm Wednesdays until
March 25th 2026**

**Midweek Services 6:30 pm Wednesdays February 25th – March 25th 2026
March - Easter Services:**

**Maundy Thursday April 2nd 2026 at 7:00 pm Good Friday April 3rd 2026 10:00 am
Easter Morning Sunday April 5th 2026 at 8:00 am and 10:00 am**