



Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021

Welcome

Kyrie — from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Setting Two*

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer-cy.

For the peace from above, and for our sal - va - tion, let us

pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

A - men.

Prayer of the Day

May God be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy 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.**

A Reading from Hebrew Scriptures — Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

¹Blow 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—
²a 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.
¹²Yet even now, says the Lord,
 return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
 ¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the Lord, your God,
 for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
 and relents from punishing.
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;
 sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
 ¹⁶gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
 assemble the aged;
gather the children,
 even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
 and the bride her canopy.
¹⁷Between 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?’”

Psalm 51:1-17

1Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
2Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
3For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
4Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.
5Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
6You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
7Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
8Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
9Hide your face from my sins,

and blot out all my iniquities.
10Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
11Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
12Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.
13Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
14Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.
15O LORD, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
16For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be
pleased.
17The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not
despise.

A Reading from the Epistles — 2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10

20bWe entreat 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.

6:1As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2For he says, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

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

Gospel — Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Gospel of Matthew, the 6th chapter.
Glory to you, O God.

[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.

16“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 our Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon — “Our Lenten Journey toward a Clean Heart”

Interim Pastor Bill Nelsen

Hymn —

“All Things of Dust to Dust Return”
Sung to the tune KINGSFOLD

**All things of dust to dust return
on earth and in the sky.
The hottest, brightest suns that burn
in time grow dim and die.
The fish that leap, the birds that soar,
the newborn young that play,
the leaves that fill the forest floor
revert to dust and clay.**

**Lord, mark with dust and ash my brow
so I may comprehend
that ev'ry moment here and now
links me to that same end**

**I share with all that breathe and burn,
that flare and fade and tire
yet by their waning light discern
your own undying fire.**

**Lord, mark upon my brow this sign:
a stark and barren cross
reminding me that though divine
you know my pain and loss,
and at the touch of dust and ash
awake my heart to view
how death itself is but a flash
that dies away in you.**

Invitation to Lent

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.

Confession of Sin

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

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

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.

Imposition of Ashes

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes or other symbols 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.

*Please mark your own forehead or that of a member of your family while saying these words:
Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
(May God bless you and renew you.)*

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

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

O God, you call your church to be ministers of reconciliation throughout the world. Inspire your church in its proclamation of the gospel and guide its ministries to build up the body of Christ. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you created the earth and all its inhabitants and you declared that it is good. Protect mountains and valleys, animals and plants, and direct us to be good stewards of all you have made. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you desire peace. Direct governments and leaders to work for the well-being of all people and raise up advocates to speak and serve on behalf of the downtrodden. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We now offer prayers for the people on our hearts. You are invited to speak their name aloud or in the silence of your hearts.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works,
chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor.

God bless you ☩ that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace, with a clean heart and right spirit. Serve the Lord. **Amen.**

You are welcome to stay on the Zoom video for conversation and fellowship following the service.

Acknowledgements

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