

THE START OF
Lent
ASH WEDNESDAY

**February 18, 2026
Ash Wednesday**

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PRAYER
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Our Mission Statement
Lutheran Church of Prayer walks with others and teaches the
Word of God through relationships and personal example.

Welcome Friends & Guests!

We pray you will be blessed by our worship today. A welcome packet can be found at the Welcome Center Desk in our lobby. Please pick one up. Each family is asked to fill out an attendance card. Place the completed card in the offering plate. If you have a prayer request to be included in the service, please write your requests on the blue Prayer Requests sheet found in the pew rack and hand it directly to an Usher before worship begins.

A Time for Quiet Meditation

As you enter the sanctuary for worship you are encouraged to use this time for prayer and meditation to prepare your hearts to worship our Lord and to look over the worship bulletin. Visiting with friends can be done in the narthex area so others will not be disturbed. Thank you.

Offering

The offering is an act of worship for members and friends of Lutheran Church of Prayer, moved by God's love, to support the mission of the church. We do not want guests to feel obligated to participate. We want you to feel welcome and we truly wish to serve you! God bless you!

Standing

If at any time during the service it becomes uncomfortable for you to stand, please feel free to sit down, even if others are standing. God knows our strengths and understands our weaknesses too.

**Organist, David Collins • Choir Director, David Ortiz
Pianist, David Collins • Handbell Director, Judy Houston
Praise Band Director, Tammy Poynor**

Serving Us Today

Pastor	Pastor Dwayne Hendricks
Elder	Tim Hartnett
Ushers	Jerry Sturz & Matt Kraley
Reader	Barb Kraley
Greeters	
Altar Circle	Carolyn Schaefer & Betty Jordin

The Good News of a God Who Hears and Answers Cries

As We Gather

We are beginning Lent, the forty days we set aside to focus on our Lord's Passion as we lead up to Easter. The Lord calls us to "Return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning," and Joel calls for a "solemn assembly" (Joel 2:12, 15). It is time to "to receive the grace of God" (2 Corinthians 6:1). And it is a time for active dialogue between each of us and our Father in heaven, as Jesus instructs in the Gospel. The readings from Exodus, which shall guide our worship through Lent, though, also provide us with Good News. We do not deserve it, but God hears and answers our cries. Be ready to pray; be ready to thank our gracious God.

Call to Worship

Chimes

Prelude:

Glory of These Forty Days"

by Lynn Trapp

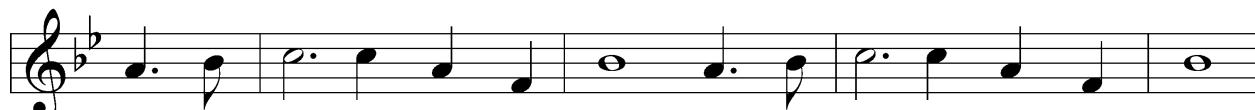
Welcome

PREPARATION

Hymn: 761 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me



1 Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, Let me hide my - self in Thee;
2 Not the la - bors of my hands Can ful - fill Thy Law's de-mands;
3 Noth - ing in my hand I bring; Sim - ply to Thy cross I cling.
4 While I draw this fleet - ing breath, When mine eye - lids close in death,



Let the wa - ter and the blood, From Thy riv - en side which flowed,
Could my zeal no res - pite know, Could my tears for - ev - er flow,
Na - ked, come to Thee for dress; Help - less, look to Thee for grace;
When I soar to worlds un - known, See Thee on Thy judg - ment throne,



Be of sin the dou - ble cure: Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.
All for sin could not a - tone; Thou must save, and Thou a - lone.
Foul, I to the foun-tain fly; Wash me, Sav - ior, or I die.
Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, Let me hide my - self in Thee.

Text: Augustus M. Toplady, 1740-78

Tune: Thomas Hastings, 1784-1872

Text and tune: Public domain

Invocation

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

C Amen.

Confession

Psalm 130

P Our faith in God is tested when it seems He is not listening to us. The problem is not how God answers but in our limited confession and our failure to totally trust Him for all we need. But God is listening and will answer! Let us now go to our gracious God in confession, expecting Him to hear our cries: Out of the depths I cry to You, O LORD!

C O Lord, hear my voice!
Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas
for mercy!

P If You, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

C **But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared.**

P I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I hope;

C **my soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning, more than
watchmen for the morning.**

P O Israel, hope in the LORD!

C **For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with Him is plentiful redemption.
And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.**

Absolution

P In His great mercy, God sent His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who took all our sins to the cross. In His stead and by His command, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the  Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

WORD

Salutation

P The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.
Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent.

C **Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness;**

P through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

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.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle: *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.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Choir Anthem: “Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God”

The John Carter Coral Series

Holy Gospel:

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

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.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C Praise to You, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed

P God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

C 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 \dagger everlasting. Amen.

Hymn: 570 Just as I Am, without One Plea

V 1-4

1 Just as I am, with - out one plea But that Thy
 2 Just as I am and wait - ing not To rid my
 3 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout With man - y a
 4 Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind; Sight, rich - es,

blood was shed for me And that Thou bidd'st me come to
 soul of one dark blot, To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each
 con - flict, man - y a doubt, Fight - ings and fears with - in, with -
 heal - ing of the mind, Yea, all I need, in Thee to

Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789-1871

Tune: William B. Bradbury, 1816-68

Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon:

Offering:

“Love and Mercy”

*By Walter L. Pelz
Choir*

Offertory

LSB 192

C Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -

new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -

way from Thy pres-ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it
 from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -
 tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

Prayer of the Church

- P** Let us pray for all people who are unsure of God's hearing their prayers.
- C** **Hear their cries, O Lord, grant them courage as You accompany, and answer them speedily.**

- P** Let us ask God to strengthen the faith of those who only recently have known Him.
- C** **Reveal Yourself gently to them, Lord Jesus, through the caring of Your church.**

- P** Let us pray for those who feel trapped by circumstances beyond their control.
- C** **Assure them that You know their dilemma and that the deliverer has come: Jesus, our Savior and Lord.**

P Let us pray for all who fear God's punishment.

C **Show them mercy, O Lord, as You passed over Your Old Testament people. Grant them peace through Your presence.**

P Let us pray for all who know no good ways to turn, are unsure of the truth, and await only their deaths.

C **Tell them again, Lord Jesus, that You alone are the way, and the truth, and the life.**

P Finally, let us pray for all who are tired from opposition in the world around them and from their own conflicts within themselves.

C **Awaken in them a sense of Your accompanying them on their journey until that day when they and we join those who have gone before us at Your heavenly banquet hall.**

P All these things we bring before Your throne, confident that we have a God who hears and answers our cries.

C **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

C 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.

Imposition of Ashes

P Symbolizing our repentance, come forward as ushered to receive a cross of ashes on your forehead.
Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
C Amen.

Dismissal

P Go in peace as you serve the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Hymn: 924 Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing *V 1-3*

1 Lord, dis - miss us with Your bless - ing, Fill our hearts with
2 Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion For Your Gos - pel's
3 Sav - ior, when Your love shall call us From our strug - gling

joy and peace; Let us each, Your love pos - sess - ing,
joy - ful sound. May the fruits of Your sal - va - tion
pil - grim way, Let not fear of death ap - pall us,

Tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace. O re - fresh us;
In our hearts and lives a - bound. Ev - er faith - ful,
Glad Your sum - mons to o - obey. May we ev - er,

O re - fresh us, Trav - 'ling through this wil - der - ness.
ev - er faith - ful To Your truth may we be found.
may we ev - er Reign with You in end - less day.

Text (sts. 1-2): attr. John Fawcett, 1740-1817, alt.; (st. 3): Godfrey Thring, 1823-1903, alt.

Tune: Henry T. Smart, 1813-79

Text and tune: Public domain

Acknowledgments

Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series A, Quarter 2.

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+ What We Believe +

God: is Triune, Father, Son, Holy Spirit; Three Persons, One Essence. He is the only true God: *Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 8:4*

Jesus: is true God, equal to the Father and Holy Spirit, the only Savior of mankind. *John 5:23; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 20:28*

Sin: all mankind is wicked; by nature the human race is spiritually blind, dead, broken in heart/mind, and in need of restoration with God and each other. God's wrath abides on all. *Genesis 8:21; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23, 7:15, 18; Mark 7:20-23; John 3:36.*

Justification: Sin and God's wrath against it has been dealt with by God through the death of God the Son on the cross. All have salvation through the blood of Jesus where our Father no longer holds our wickedness and sin against us but declares us righteous. We have peace again with God through faith in Jesus. This good news gives believers hope, peace, joy, and love to live as Christians. *Romans 5:1-10; John 3:16, 36; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 John 2:1-2; Corinthians 5:18-21.*

Conversion: to faith in the Savior is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (spoken, written, and sacramental). In the message of the cross God gathers His family. *Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 1:23; John 3:5-6; 1 Corinthians 12:3.*

Holy Baptism: is a gracious work of the Holy Spirit Who creates faith, washes away sins, and connects us to Jesus and His body the church. *John 3:5-6; Acts 22:16; Galatians 3:27, 1 Peter 3:21; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13.*

The Holy Spirit's Work: Converted through faith in Jesus our human nature still threatens our unity with God and each other. Reconciliation, that is repentance and faith, is the daily rhythm of believers. Guilt and sorrow are promptings of the Holy Spirit for us to speak with God confessing thoughts, words, and actions asking Him for forgiveness in Jesus' name. *Ephesians 4:30-32; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Hebrews 10:19-25.*

The Lord's Supper: or Holy Communion is Christ's True Body and Blood, where He is really present in the bread and wine to assure us of forgiveness. We gather to receive Jesus often because we daily sin much and are in constant need of His power to live the Christian life of faith, hope, and love/charity. *John 6:53-59; 15:5; Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-29; 1 Corinthians 10:16.*

Scripture: is inspired by God, without error and is our solid guide to life. *John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16.*

Creation: happened according to Genesis 1-2. Evolution is unscriptural, unscientific, and unnecessary. *Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:3; Psalm 33:6.*

2nd Coming: of Jesus will be sudden/unexpected. *2 Peter 3:10; Mark 13:32; Matthew 24.* We are living in the New Testament era where we rule with Jesus in the activity of sharing His message of love. *1 Corinthians 15:23-26; Ephesians 2:1-7; Matthew 28:19-20; Revelation 20:4-6*