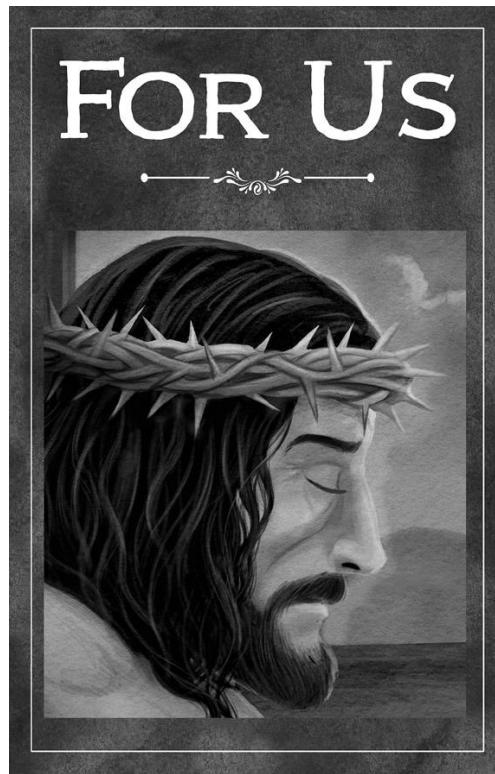


ASH WEDNESDAY



FEBRUARY 18, 2026

ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (LCMS)
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AS WE GATHER—"O LOVE, HOW DEEP, HOW BROAD, HOW HIGH"

This Ash Wednesday, we introduce our Lent sermon series, which is based on the ancient hymn "O Love, How Deep" (LSB 544). This hymn, written in the fifteenth century, contemplates the love of God in becoming man, taking on our life, dying our death, and rising again, all *for us*. But for us to understand and appreciate this love, we must first examine ourselves and our lives to see how we have failed in thought, word, and deed. While we may try to get credit for our so-called good works, we all still die with nothing to show for them. But God's love is not like our love. Our love is self-centered and fickle. God's love is steady, deep, and beyond all understanding (Ephesians 3:14-19). This love of God will have no end.

† PREPARATION †

ASH WEDNESDAY ADDRESS

¶ 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.

THE LITANY

P. 288

† THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES †

The pastor receives ashes first, followed by the congregation. Using the right thumb, the pastor places the ashes on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, saying:

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

HYMNS FOR THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

"SAVIOR, WHEN IN DUST TO THEE"

419

"CHIEF OF SINNERS THOUGH I BE"

611

† CONFESSiON & ABSOLUTION †

P. 203

† SERVICE OF THE WORD †

SALUTATION & COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

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.

C Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT

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.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

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. ²Thus, 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. ⁵And 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. ¹⁶And 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. ¹⁹Do 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.

NICENE CREED

(back inside cover of hymnal)

HYMN OF THE DAY**“O LOVE, HOW DEEP”****544 (v.1, 3, 5-6)**

1 O love, how deep, how broad, how high,
 3 For us bap - tized, for us He bore
 5 For us by wick - ed - ness be - trayed,
 6 For us He rose from death a gain;

Be - yond all thought and fan - ta - sy,
 His ho - ly fast and hun - gered sore;
 For us, in crown of thorns ar - rayed,
 For us He went on high to reign;

That God, the Son of God, should take
 For us temp - ta - tion sharp He knew;
 He bore the shame ful cross and death;
 For us He sent His Spir - it here

Our mor - tal form for mor - tals' sake!
 For us the tempt - er o - ver threw.
 For us He gave His dy - ing breath.
 To guide, to strength - en, and to cheer.

Text: Public domain

SERMON**OFFERING**



On my heart im - print Your im - age, Bless - ed Je - sus, King of grace,



That life's rich-es, cares, and plea-sures Nev - er may Your work e-rase;



Let the clear in - scrip-tion be: Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me,



Is my life, my hope's foun - da - tion, And my glo - ry and sal - va - tion!

Text and tune: Public domain

OFFERING PRAYER

- P** We pray,
- C** **Have mercy on Your Church, O God. As we enter the season of Lent, let us hold fast to Your Word. Teach us to die to self and serve You and our neighbor faithfully throughout this mortal life, to grow in the joy of Your salvation. Amen.**

† SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT †

PAGES 208-210

The Sacrament is celebrated at this congregation in the confession and glad confidence that our Lord, as He says, gives not only bread and wine, but His true body and blood to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, to repentant, reconciled believers in Christ. Our Lord Jesus invites to His table those who trust His words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as He forgives and loves us (Matt. 26:26-28; 1Cor. 11:23-29; Matt.6:15).

We practice closed communion. Why? (1 Cor. 10:16-17). Because our Lord says those who eat and drink His body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm. If not

yet instructed, in doubt, or holding a confession differing from that of the LCMS, you are lovingly asked not to commune at this time. Pastor is happy to make an appointment to discuss adult catechesis or questions you have regarding the Sacrament of the Altar.

Examination Questions: Please prepare by asking yourself — Am I sorry for my sins? Do I believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior from sin? Do I believe that I am receiving the body and blood of Christ along with the bread and wine? Will I try, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to live a more God-pleasing life?

Prayers for “Before communing” and “Thanksgiving after receiving the Sacrament” are printed on the front cover of the hymnal.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

“NOW, MY TONGUE, THE MYSTERY TELLING”	630 (T:454)
“HOW WIDE THE LOVE OF CHRIST”	535
“JESUS SINNERS DOOTH RECEIVE”	609
NUNC DIMITTIS	P. 211
POST-COMMUNION COLLECT	
BENEDICAMUS AND BENEDICTION	
HYMN TO DEPART	“O LORD, THROUGHOUT THESE FORTY DAYS”
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LENTEN MIDWEEK & HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

**2/25 MIDWEEK OF LENT 1, 7:00 P.M. "THE ROBE OF HUMAN FRAME"
LENTEN SUPPER HOSTED BY THE ELDERS- 6:00-6:45 P.M.
FREE WILL OFFERING- MENU INCLUDES PIZZA AND SALAD**

3/4 MIDWEEK OF LENT 2, 7:00 P.M. "HEALING FROM DEMONS"

3/11 MIDWEEK OF LENT 3, 7:00 P.M. "FOR US HE SEEKS"

3/18 MIDWEEK OF LENT 4, 7:00 P.M. "DONE FOR US" (AT ST. PETER)

3/25 MIDWEEK OF LENT 5, 7:00 P.M. "FOR US BETRAYED" (AT ST. PETER)

3/29 PALM SUNDAY, 8:00 A.M. AND 10:30 A.M.

4/2 HOLY THURSDAY, 7:00 P.M. "FOR MANY MEANS FOR YOU"

4/3 GOOD FRIDAY, 7:00 P.M. "HIS DYING BREATH"

4/4 EASTER VIGIL, 7:45 P.M. "FOR US HE ROSE" (AT ST. JOHN, PLATO)

4/5 EASTER SUNDAY

6:30 A.M. EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE "FOR US HE LIVES"

7:30-8:45 A.M. EASTER BREAKFAST

9:30 A.M. FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION SERVICE