

Create in me

a CLEAN HEART

O God;



and RENEW a
RIGHT SPIRIT *within me.* Psalm 51:10

Abiding Presence Lutheran Church and Preschool

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The People of God, Ministers

The Reverend Paul Egensteiner, Bishop

The Reverend Robert Schoepflin, Pastor

Ms. Kathy Pucci, Deacon

Mr. Gavin Schwen, Deacon

Dr. Thomas Zatorski, Director of Music

Ms. Lisa Pecchio, Soloist

Ms. Jean Seher, Mr. Roy Seher, Assisting 10:00am

Dcn. Gavin Schwen, Mr. Brian Forberg, Mr. Robert Cubbon, Mr. Art Isakson, Ms. Vivian Isakson, Assisting 7:30pm

Mr. Nicholas Seery, Greeter 7:30pm

Ms. Kathy Smith, Dcn. Kathy Pucci, Ms. Janet Schoepflin, Readers 10:00am

Mr. Robert Cubbon, Ms. Vivian Isakson, Mr. Marc Sorensen, Readers 7:30pm

Mr. Brian Forberg, Video Production



**Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America**

Welcome to Worship!
Ash Wednesday
February 18, 2026
10:00am and 7:30pm

INTRODUCTION

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

We begin in silence

PSALM 51

Spoken responsively

¹Have 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.**

³For 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.**

⁵Indeed, 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.**

⁷Remove 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.**

⁹Hide 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.**

¹¹Cast 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.**

¹³Let 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.**

¹⁵O 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.**

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

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.**

Amen.

Please stand as you are able.

GREETING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Please be seated

First Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming day of the LORD, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community declares that God is gracious and asks God to spare the people lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

A Reading from Joel

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?' "

Lector/. Word of God. Word of Life. Congregation/. Thanks be to God.

PSALM 103: 8-14

Spoken responsively

⁸LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;
⁹**you will not always accuse us,**
nor will you keep your anger forever.
¹⁰You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.
¹¹**For as the heavens are high above the earth,**
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.
¹²As far as the east is from the west,
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.
¹³**As a father has compassion for his children,**
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.
¹⁴For you know well how we are formed;
you remember that we are but dust.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

A Reading from 2 Corinthians

^{20b}We 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. ^{6:1}As 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.

Lector/. *Word of God. Word of Life.* Congregation/. Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION **(spoken in unison)**

Return to the Lord, your God, who is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

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

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

Before the Gospel.

Glory to You, O Lord

The Holy Gospel According to Matthew

[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 the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated

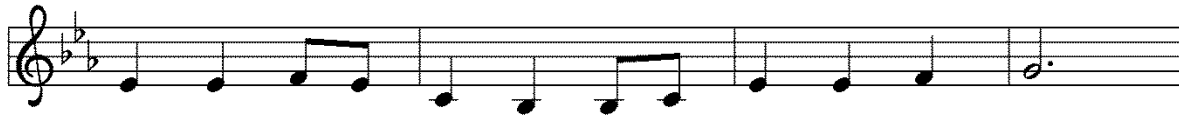
THE MEDITATION

Please stand as you are able

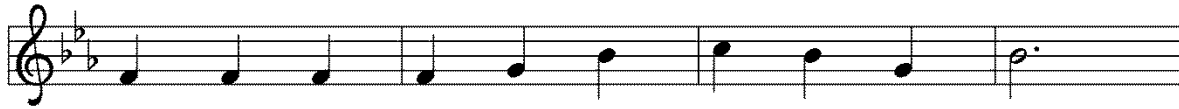
HYMN 793

“Be Thou My Vision”

Slane



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860–1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880–1931
Music: SLANE, Irish traditional

Please be seated

INVITATION TO LENT

Friends in Christ, today 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

The presiding minister leads the following confession.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
The assembly remains seated. Silence is kept for reflection and self examination.

P: Most holy and merciful God,

**C: 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.**

P: 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.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: 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.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

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

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

PRAYER OVER ASHES

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.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Assembled are invited to come forward and kneel or stand to receive ashes on forehead or hand (please indicate preference), as the following words are spoken by the Pastor.

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

After all have received, the liturgy continues.

P: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation.

C: that we may show forth your glory in the world.

P: By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

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

P: 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.

C: Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (Response" Your mercy is great.")

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs, responding "your mercy is great."

A brief silence.

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.

SHARING OF PEACE

Please be seated

SOLO 10:00am ***“Lord Jesus Think On Me”***
Sung by Lisa Pecchio

ANTHEM 7:30pm ***“Make Us Faithful Servants”*** English folk tune
Choir of The Abiding Presence Adapted by Orin Johnson

OFFERING

Gifts are presented during the solo or anthem

Please stand as you are able

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray: O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.

**You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.**

**Through these gifts of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.**

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.

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.

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 Lord,
God of power and might:
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

+Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.
Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

**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

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
 Happy are those who are called to come to his Supper.
**O Lord, we are not worthy to receive you, but only say the
 word and we shall be healed.**

ANGUS DEI



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Please be seated

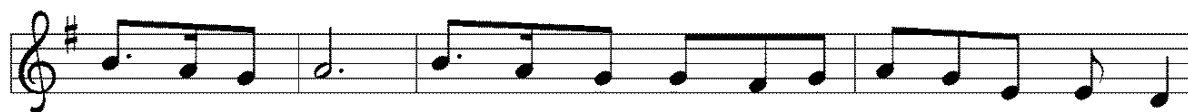
THE DISTRIBUTION

Gluten-free wafers are available. When you come forward, please let your Communion Minister know if you wish to receive a gluten-free wafer.

COMMUNION HYMN 608 “Softly and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling”



- 1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
- 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
- 3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for



you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain



watch - ing for you and for me.
mer - cies for you and for me? “Come home, come home!”
par - don for you and for me.



You who are wea - ry, come home.” Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, “O sin - ner, come home!”

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847–1909
Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson

Please stand as you are able

BLESSING

PRAYER

Let us pray: God of our salvation,
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.
Through the body and blood of your Son,
may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

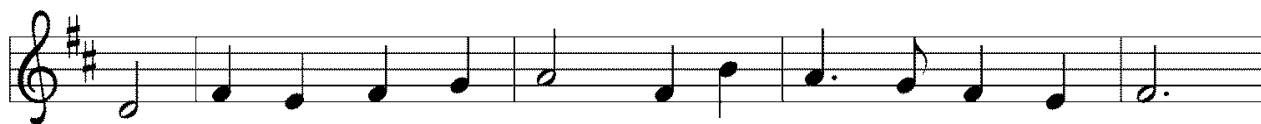
BLESSING

Let us bless the Lord.

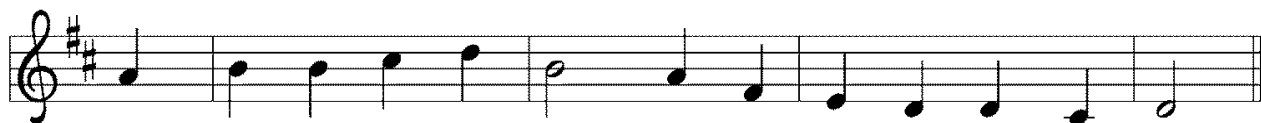
Thanks be to God.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor, and give you his peace,
In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN 539 *“Abide O Dearest Jesus”*



- 1 A - bide, O dear - est Je - sus, a - mong us with your grace,
- 2 A - bide, O dear Re - deem - er, a - mong us with your word
- 3 A - bide with heav'n-ly bright - ness a - mong us, pre - cious Light;
- 4 A - bide with rich - est bless - ings a - mong us, boun-teous Lord;
- 5 A - bide, O faith - ful Sav - ior, a - mong us with your love;



that e - vil may not harm us nor we to sin give place.
and thus now and here - af - ter true peace and joy af - ford.
your truth di - rect and keep us from er - ror's gloom - y night.
let us in grace and wis - dom grow dai - ly through your word.
grant stead-fast-ness and help us to reach our home a - bove.

DISMISSAL

P: 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.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

“What Wondrous Love is This”

Paul Manz



LENTEN

Calendar & Events

2026

at

**Abiding Presence Lutheran Church
Fort Salonga, New York
(631) 269-6454**

MONDAYS in LENT

The Holy Eucharist: 7:30pm

WEDNESDAYS in LENT

February 25 - March 25

Holy Communion: 10:30am & 7:30pm

Soup Suppers 6:30pm

HOLY WEEK

March 29 - The Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday: 9:30am

March 30 - Monday of Holy Week: Holy Communion 7:30pm

April 1 - Wednesday of Holy Week: Passover Seder 6:30pm

(Reservation required through Eventbrite)

April 2 - Maundy Thursday: Holy Communion, Foot Washing 10:00am

Holy Communion, Foot Washing, Stripping of Altar 7:30pm

April 3 - Good Friday: 12:00 noon & 7:30pm

April 4 - Holy Saturday: The Great Vigil of Easter 7:30pm

April 5 - Easter: Sunrise Service at Sunken Meadow State Park 6:30am

Festival Holy Communion at Abiding Presence Church

9:00am & 11:00am

NO MONDAY HOLY EUCHARIST ON APRIL 6

Ash Wednesday: The First Day of Lent

The spirit of Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is most solemn. It is close to that of the Jewish Day of Atonement. The mood is one of penitence and reflection on the quality of our life and faith. The Sanctuary, brilliant with the light of the Transfiguration last Sunday, is now austere and subdued. We begin with a silent Procession. After the Sermon and Hymn of the Day, there is an "Invitation to Lent" followed by a special Confession. Its purpose is to open us to a restoration into the grace of God, and lead us through the Lenten Season to a new spiritual and moral growth. The color has changed to purple - a color of penitence and reflection. Hence the derivation of the word *Lent*, which means springtime, or the period of growing days. Lent is a holy springtime of the soul, a time of preparation, planting and growth.

The ancient custom of ashes is an extraordinarily rich symbol. It is rooted in both Jewish and Christian understanding of judgment and God's condemnation of sin. It reminds us of our mortality, *ashes to ashes, dust to dust*, for one day these words will be said over us. Ashes also suggest cleansing and renewal. Once, ashes were used as a cleansing agent in the absence of soap. It is, therefore, a penitential substitute for water as a sign of Baptism. Farmers often burned their fields in the early spring to make ready for the planting of a new crop. Ash Wednesday is that occasion for the Christian. Palms from last Palm Sunday have been burned, and they have been prepared for imposition on Ash Wednesday. Those wishing to receive ashes, please come to the Altar as indicated in the bulletin. Following the Confession and Imposition of Ashes there is a statement of grace, but not a full pronouncement of forgiveness. This is reserved until Maundy Thursday at the completion of Lent. Hence, the whole of Lent is experienced as an ongoing period of penitence and preparation.