



ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

OUR MISSION:

TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL

TO MAKE DISCIPLES

TO EMBODY GOD'S LOVE

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.

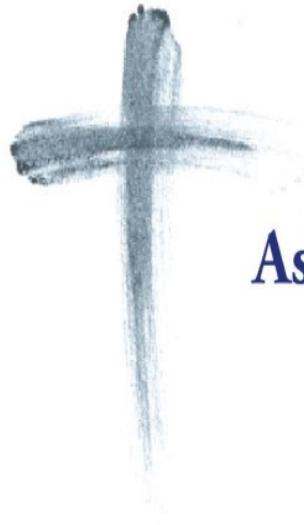
Thanks be to God!



Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

**A Service of Word & Sacrament
Confession and Imposition of the Ashes
7 PM**



Ash Wednesday
— Lent Begins



**Please stand as able*

P: Pastor; C: Congregation

GATHERING

He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

***HYMN**

“Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”

ELW #857

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, **✝** one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **C: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin before God, *Silence for reflection.* Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: forgiveness of all your sins. **C: Amen.**

***THE IMPOSITION OF THE ASHES**

At the direction of the ushers, please come forward to the communion rail to receive the imposition of ashes. If you're unable to come to the rail, please indicate your desire to receive ashes to an usher.

“Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return”

P: 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. **C: Amen.**

P: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. **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.**

***HYMN**

“Lord Jesus, Think on Me”

ELW #599

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: 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. **C: Amen.**

WORD

LESSONS

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Carol Schaefer

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:**

“Let Your Steadfast Love”

ELW p. #125

GOSPEL READING

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **C: Glory to you, O Lord**

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

P: The Gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**CHILDREN’S SERMON
SERMON**

**Pastor Quentin Surace
Pastor Quentin Surace**

APOSTLE’S CREED

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Reconciled by God’s mercy and sustained by God’s presence, let us pray for the world and its needs. *A brief silence.*
Hear us, O God. **C: Your mercy is great.**

OFFERING/OFFERTORY

Instrumental

GREAT THANKSGIVING

WORDS OF INSTITUTION COMMUNION II

***LAMB OF GOD (SETTING 2)**

p. 135

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.

MEAL

Sharing of Holy Communion—All are welcome

***CLOSING BLESSING** P: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, **✠** bless you now and always. Together let us proclaim our mission: **C: To proclaim the Gospel. To make disciples. To embody God’s love. Amen.**

***SENDING HYMN**

“Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer”

ELW #618

***DISMISSAL** P: Go in peace. Believe the good news. **C: Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF LENT

Though the Scriptures do not mention Lent, it has a longstanding tradition in the Church. It began very simply as a time of preparation for Easter. At first this was a 2-day fast (Friday and Saturday). Though not certain how it developed, by 350 A.D., the 40-day fast was already established. The earliest reference to a 40 day fast leading up to Easter is the Second Festal Letter of Athanasius in 330 A.D. Today, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday (Sundays are excluded to preserve the number 40).

Historically, Lent had two major emphases: 1) It was seen as a time of repentance and denial of self. All Christians were to examine their lives and repent where necessary; and 2) It was a time of instruction and preparation for the catechumens who were preparing themselves to become members of the Christian Church. Lent is an open invitation to enter into a deeper relationship with Christ through a conversion of heart and mind. For the baptized it is a return to their baptism in repentance, confession of sin, amendment of life, through disciplines that deepen and foster one’s spiritual life, and acts of self sacrifice that focus our call to service.

Lent is taking up our call to become, as Luther said, “little Christs.” The work of Lent is a noble work of grace and the Spirit. We are invited and empowered to struggle, grow, and live into who we are called to be, and to become as those joined to Christ in baptism.

LENTEN EXHORTATION

Brothers and sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of his creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love - the discipline of Lent - help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking God to give you strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17

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—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.

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 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. 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? Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; 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. 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?’ ”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20b-6:10

We entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. 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. As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 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! We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true, as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.

MATTHEW 6:10-6, 16-21

[Jesus said to the disciples:] “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. “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. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “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. 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.

“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. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 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. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”