

St. Johns Lutheran Church



SITTING IN DUST AND ASHES

St. Johns Lutheran Church

3738 Morgan Ford Rd. St. Louis, Missouri 63116

Ash Wednesday February 18th, 2026

Promised Treasures: Sitting In Dust And Ashes

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AS WE GATHER

Lent begins with ashes. The wearing of ashes on our forehead may seem like an unusual tradition, but it is rich with meaning. From the earliest days, God's children have repented before Him in sackcloth and ashes, a visual reflection of their hearts turning to Him for forgiveness and restoration. Fixing our eyes on Jesus during the forty-day season of Lent, we journey with Him to Calvary's cross where, enduring the "ashes" of our sins and the penalty they deserve, He grants to us the beauty of His forgiveness, full and free. Let us be renewed in our hearts and minds this day as we gather in the Lord's house. His Word will show us our great need for His saving love and deliver to us the treasures He has promised.

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

LITANY

O Lord,
have mercy.
O Christ,
have mercy.
O Lord,
have mercy.

O Christ,

hear us.

God the Father in heaven,

have mercy.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

have mercy.

God the Holy Spirit,

have mercy.

Be gracious to us.

Spare us, good Lord.

Be gracious to us.

Help us, good Lord.

By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity; by Your baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and passion; by Your precious death and burial; by Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

Help us, good Lord.

In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the day of judgment:

Help us, good Lord.

We poor sinners implore You

to hear us, O Lord.

To prosper the preaching of Your Word; to bless our prayer and meditation; to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith; and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:

We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

To draw all to Yourself; to bless those who are instructed in the faith; to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the lonely, the forsaken, the abandoned, and all who stand in need of our prayers; to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy; and to have mercy on us all:

We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

To turn our hearts to You; to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers; and graciously to hear our prayers:

We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

we implore You to hear us.

Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

have mercy.

Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

have mercy.

Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

grant us Your peace.

O Christ,

hear us.

O Lord,

have mercy.

O Christ,

have mercy.

O Lord,

have mercy. Amen.

O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

HYMN “Savior, When in Dust to Thee” LSB 419

Savior, when in dust to Thee

Low we bow the adoring knee;

When, repentant, to the skies

Scarce we lift our weeping eyes;

O, by all Thy pains and woe

Suffered once for us below,

Bending from Thy throne on high,

Hear our penitential cry!

By Thy helpless infant years,

By Thy life of want and tears,

By Thy days of deep distress

In the savage wilderness,

By the dread, mysterious hour

**Of the insulting tempter's pow'r,
Turn, O turn a fav'ring eye;
Hear our penitential cry!**

**By thine hour of dire despair,
By thine agony of prayer,
By the cross, the nail, the thorn,
Piercing spear, and torturing scorn,
By the gloom that veiled the skies
O'er the dreadful sacrifice,
Listen to our humble sigh;
Hear our penitential cry!**

**By Thy deep expiring groan,
By the sad sepulchral stone,
By the vault whose dark abode
Held in vain the rising God,
O, from earth to heav'n restored,
Mighty, re-ascended Lord,
Bending from Thy throne on high,
Hear our penitential cry!**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

HYMN "Christ, the Life of All the Living" LSB 420 v. 1-4

**Christ, the Life of all the living,
Christ, the death of death, our foe,
Who, Thyself for me once giving
To the darkest depths of woe:
Through thy suff'rings, death, and merit
I eternal life inherit.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

**Thou, ah! Thou, hast taken on Thee
Bonds and stripes, a cruel rod;
Pain and scorn were heaped upon Thee,
O Thou sinless Son of God!**

**Thus didst Thou my soul deliver
From the bonds of sin forever.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

**Thou hast borne the smiting only
That my wounds might all be whole;
Thou hast suffered, sad and lonely,
Rest to give my weary soul;
Yea, the curse of God enduring,
Blessing unto me securing.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

**Heartless scoffers did surround Thee,
Treating Thee with shameful scorn
And with piercing thorns they crowned Thee.
All disgrace Thou, Lord, hast borne,
That as Thine Thou mightest own me
And with heav'nly glory crown me.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

INVOCATION (*Stand as you are able*)

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
**But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive
our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

**Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and
unclean. We have sinned against You 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; we have not loved our neighbors as
ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment.**

For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

PSALM Psalm 51:1–4, 10–12

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love;

according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight,

so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from Your presence,

and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,

and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

KYRIE LSB, p. 152

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, You exchanged the ashes of our sin for the beauty of Your holiness when You died and rose again for us. Renew our hearts and minds during this Lenten season as we receive the promised treasures of Your Word; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING Job 30:11–19 (*Sit*)

¹¹ Because God has loosed my cord and humbled me, they have cast off restraint in my presence. ¹² On my right hand the rabble rise; they push away my feet; they cast up against me their ways of destruction. ¹³ They break up my path; they promote my calamity; they need no one to help them. ¹⁴ As through a wide breach they come; amid the crash they roll on. ¹⁵ Terrors are turned upon me; my honor is pursued as by the wind, and my prosperity has passed away like a cloud. ¹⁶ “And now my soul is poured out within me; days of affliction have taken hold of me. ¹⁷ The night racks my bones, and the pain that gnaws me takes no rest. ¹⁸ With great force my garment is disfigured; it binds me about like the collar of my tunic. ¹⁹ God has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL Hebrews 12:2

[O come, let us fix our eyes on] Jesus,

the founder and perfecter of our faith,

who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,

and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

EPISTLE 2 Corinthians 5:16–6:2

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. ¹ Working together with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

VERSE FOR LENT LSB, p. 157 (*Stand as you are able*)

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

HOLY GOSPEL Matthew 11:20–30

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eleventh chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

²⁰ Then He began to denounce the cities where most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. ²¹ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades.

For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.” ²⁵ At that time Jesus declared, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will. ²⁷ All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. ²⁸ Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

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

SERIES HYMN “One House Abides Unending” (*Sit*)

**One house abides unending,
One Master fears no fall,
One Lord provides, attending
The daily want of all.
When ruin would allure them
Whose one estate was need,
One Father would secure them
In will, in trust, in deed.**

**The wealth of all creation
We squandered at our birth.
The heirs of condemnation
Sowed tears in blighted earth.
But light, the world’s first treasure,
The Master worked anew
In promise, and in measure
No mortal eye could view.**

**With endless hunger driven
The grave cried out for more,**

**But Jesus Christ has given
Safe passage through its door:
His flowing blood our raiment,
The flood to purge our shame;
The living God the payment
That buys for us His name.**

**Exchange our ash for beauty,
Anoint our grief with joy;
Dear Lord, who paid our duty,
All grace for us employ.
Feed us the saving manna
Lest on the way we fail
And sweeten our Hosanna
To holy Easter's hail.**

SERMON

NICENE CREED *(Stand as you are able)*

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

OFFERING *(Sit)*



(Scan this code with your phone if you would like to give online)

OFFERTORY LSB, p. 159

What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?

I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord.

I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord.

I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH *(Stand as you are able)*

Gracious God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You for blessing us with the opportunity to meditate again on the cross of Christ and receive Your promised treasures.

Grant that the message of the Lamb of God slain for our salvation brings us the riches of Your pardon and peace.

Lead us to see that our sins caused Jesus' great agony in the garden, that our sins nailed Him to the cross of Calvary,

that He was forsaken by His Father so that we might never be forsaken, and that He died so that we may live.

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who come to You in repentance and faith.

Create in us clean hearts to receive from You the promised treasures of Your mercy and forgiveness.

Holy Spirit, lift up troubled souls everywhere. Grant wholeness to those hurting in heart, body, and mind. Work Your healing power in the lives of those in need, [especially . . .], and in the lives of all we name before You in our hearts.

All glory, honor, and praise be to You, with the Father and the Son, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

PREFACE LSB, p. 160

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 Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who overcame the assaults of the devil and gave His life as a ransom for many that with hearts cleansed from the ashes of our sin we might joyfully receive the promised treasures of His body and blood in the feast He has prepared. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS LSB, p. 161

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might:

Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.

Hosanna. Hosanna.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING LSB, p. 161

Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the promised treasure of salvation accomplished for us by the life-giving sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Holy Spirit.

In the fellowship of His Table, we are blessed to receive Christ's forgiveness as He exchanges the ashes of our sin for His perfect righteousness. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD LSB, p. 162

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My T body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My T blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI LSB, p. 163

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

AGNUS DEI LSB, p. 163

**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.**

DISTRIBUTION

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS (*Sit*)

“Lord, Jesus, Think on Me” LSB 610

“To Thee, Omniscient Lord of All” LSB 613

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

LSB, p. 165 (*Stand as you are able*)

Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of ev’ry people:

A light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT LSB, p. 166

Let us pray.

O God the Father, who in love and mercy sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that You have given us pardon and peace in this Supper. Grant us the faith to always trust that because of Your Son’s death and resurrection, You have taken the ashes of our sin and given us the beauty of Your forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Amen.

HYMN “Christ, the Life of All the Living” LSB 420 v. 5–7 (*Sit*)

Thou hast suffered men to bruise Thee,

That from pain I might be free;

Falsely did Thy foes accuse Thee:

Thence I gain security;

Comfortless Thy soul did languish

**Me to comfort in my anguish.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

**Thou hast suffered great affliction
And hast borne it patiently,
Even death by crucifixion,
Fully to atone for me;
Thou didst choose to be tormented
That my doom should be prevented.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

**Then, for all that wrought my pardon,
For Thy sorrows deep and sore,
For Thine anguish in the Garden,
I will thank Thee evermore,
Thank Thee for Thy groaning, sighing,
For Thy bleeding and Thy dying,
For that last triumphant cry,
And shall praise Thee, Lord, on high.**

Preacher	Pastor Ben Wescoatt
Liturgist	Pastor Ben Wescoatt
Elder	Earl Welch
Organist	Suzanne Manelli

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