

ASH WEDNESDAY

MARCH 5, 2025

THE HAND OF THE LORD WHO FREELY GIVES

AS WE GATHER

The Christmas trees we decorated with careful hands just a few months ago have come and gone. The account of our salvation in Jesus Christ, the Babe of Bethlehem, has progressed from the manger through the Epiphany light of our Lord's proclamation of "liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind" (Luke 4:18; see Isaiah 61:1). The palm fronds we held and waved with our hands with cheers and hosannas a year ago have since withered and turned to the ashes we bless this night in hope. Lent returns, reminding us that the Christian life is one of *repeated, daily repentance and faith* because, though our deliverance is made sure, we walk by faith in the "not yet" of complete holiness and final release from sin. Repentance means we come this night with empty hands, that is, the confession of our total need of God's mercy, grace, and deliverance. We come to the God who has revealed Himself in love in the forgiveness of our sin by means of His own bloody, substitutionary sacrifice in our own human flesh for us and for our salvation. With the pastor's hands the ashes of our failings and sin are placed over the sign we received at our Baptism, and we are welcomed to repentance and faith freely given by the hand of the Lord.

Reception of Holy Communion: If you are planning to receive Christ's supper today, please read through the words of exhortation in the fellowship folder. For members, it is a good review of important spiritual matters for gathering at the table. For guests, it explains our stance on confession of faith, doctrinal unity, and proper spiritual preparation to receive the Supper for your benefit.

Due to the solemn character of the day, pre-service music and a hymn of invocation are omitted.

1

+ PREPARATION +

ASH WEDNESDAY ADDRESS

P 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 of salvation in sincerity and truth.

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 90*

- P Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
- C **You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!" For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.**
- P You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.
- C **For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed. You have set our**

iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

2

P For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you?

C **So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.**

P Return, O LORD! How long? Have pity on your servants!

C **Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.**

P Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil.

C **Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.**

P Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!

Silence for reflection

P 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.

C **Amen.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

As the ashes are imposed on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, the pastor says, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

3

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!

INVOCATION

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

C **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Joel 2:13*

P Return to the LORD, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,

C **slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

P Let us rend our hearts, confessing our sins to God, our Father.

C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by our own hands, 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.**

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. He has opened His hands in the free blessings of the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. 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 + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

+ WORD +

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

COLLECT 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. 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 READING *Joel 2:12-19*

L The Old Testament Reading is from Joel, the second chapter.

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.

6 continued

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.**

PSALM *Psalms 51:1–13*

P Have mercy on me, O God,

C **according to your steadfast love;**

P according to your abundant mercy

C **blot out my transgressions.**

P Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

C **and cleanse me from my sin!**

P For I know my transgressions,

C **and my sin is ever before me.**

P Against you, you only, have I sinned

C **and done what is evil in your sight,**

P so that you may be justified in your words

C **and blameless in your judgment.**

P Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,

C **and in sin did my mother conceive me.**

P Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,

7

C **and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**

P Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

C **wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

P Let me hear joy and gladness;

C **let the bones that you have broken rejoice.**

P Hide your face from my sins,

C **and blot out all my iniquities.**

P Create in me a clean heart, O God,

C **and renew a right spirit within me.**

P Cast me not away from your presence,

C **and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

P Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

C **and uphold me with a willing spirit.**

P Then I will teach transgressors your ways,

C **and sinners will return to you.**

EPISTLE *2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10*

L The Epistle is from Second Corinthians, the fifth and sixth chapters.

^{20b}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.

^{6:1}Working 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,

⁸ continued

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.**

6:00 Choir *"We Who Have Sinned"*

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. . . .

⁹ continued

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.**

NICENE CREED

C **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.

10 continued

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.

HYMN “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” (*LSB* 761)

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure:
Cleanse me from its guilt and pow’r.

Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill Thy Law’s demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly:
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,

See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

11

SERMON

“The Hand of the Lord Who Freely Gives”
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

OFFERTORY

(*LSB* p. 192)

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence,
and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation,
and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.

OFFERING

As your offering is collected, **please sign our fellowship folder** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the folder along to others in your pew, and return it to the center aisle. You may check the folder to see names of those to greet after the service.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.
For the holy Christian Church throughout the world and for all who enter this holy season of Lent in true repentance and faith—that God guard and defend us from the temptations of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh; cleanse our hearts; and renew a right spirit within us—let us pray to the Lord.
- C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P For all who do not know the gracious invitation of God through His Son to return to Him—that many may hear and be drawn to the Lord’s merciful and saving hands—let us pray to the Lord.
- C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For those who have wandered from the faith—that the Holy Spirit restore them to the only hope of salvation—let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

12

P For the government and those placed in positions of authority—that they perform their duties with honor for the good of all people—let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For all who suffer from sickness, injury, or any need—that the Lord’s healing hand rest upon them, giving them strength to bear their infirmities with patience—let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

+ SACRAMENT +

PREFACE

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

PROPER PREFACE

P 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 cleansed hearts we might be prepared joyfully to celebrate the Paschal Feast in sincerity and truth. Therefore with

angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and saying:

13

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.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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

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.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI (LSB, p. 163)

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **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

14

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

“Today Your Mercy Calls Us” (*LSB* 915)

Today Your mercy calls us To wash away our sin.
However great our trespass, Whatever we have been.
However long from mercy Our hearts have turned away,
Your precious blood can wash us And make us clean today.

Today Your gate is open, And all who enter in
Shall find a Father’s welcome And pardon for their sin.
The past shall be forgotten, A present joy be giv’n,
A future grace be promised, A glorious crown in heav’n.

Today our Father calls us; His Holy Spirit waits;
His blessed angels gather Around the heav’nly gates.
No question will be asked us How often we have come;
Although we oft have wandered, It is our Father’s home.

O all-embracing Mercy, O ever-open Door,
What should we do without You When heart and eye run o’er?
When all things seem against us, To drive us to despair,
We know one gate is open, One ear will hear our prayer.

“When in the Hour of Deepest Need” (*LSB* 615)

When in the hour of deepest need
We know not where to look for aid;
When days and nights of anxious thought
No help or counsel yet have brought.

Then is our comfort this alone
That we may meet before Your throne;
To You, O faithful God, we cry

For rescue in our misery.

For You have promised, Lord, to heed
Your children’s cries in time of need
Through Him whose name alone is great,
Our Savior and our advocate.

15 continued

And so we come, O God, today
And all our woes before You lay;
For solely tried, cast down, we stand,
Perplexed by fears on ev’ry hand.

O from our sins, Lord, turn Your face;
Absolve us through Your boundless grace.
Be with us in our anguish still;
Free us at last from ev’ry ill.

So we with all our hearts each day
To You our glad thanksgiving pay,
Then walk obedient to Your Word,
And now and ever praise You, Lord.

“Lord Jesus, Think on Me” (*LSB* 610)

Lord Jesus, think on me And purge away my sin;
From worldly passions set me free And make me pure within.

Lord Jesus, think on me, By anxious thoughts oppressed;
Let me Your loving servant be And taste Your promised rest.

Lord Jesus, think on me Amid the battle’s strife;
In all my pain and misery, O be my health and life!

Lord Jesus, think on me Nor let me go astray;
Through darkness and perplexity Point out Your chosen way.

Lord Jesus, think on me That, when this life is past,
I may the eternal brightness see And share Your joy at last.

COMMON DISMISSAL

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

P Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

C **Into your hands I commend my spirit.**

P You have redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth.

C **Into your hands I commend my spirit.**

16

P Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

C **Into your hands I commend my spirit.**

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

The eyes of all look expectantly to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. We give thanks to you, O God, that by your hand this day you have satisfied our deepest desire, the renewal of our hearts and spirits by the forgiveness of our sins and the promise of everlasting life. Help us to have generous and thankful hearts and hands to share your mercy and grace as we forgive our neighbors as we ourselves have been forgiven by you; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

P 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.

C **Amen.**

HYMN “Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me” (*LSB* 722)

Lord, take my hand and lead me Upon life’s way:
Direct, protect, and feed me From day to day.
Without Your grace and favor I go astray;

So take my hand , O Savior, And lead the way.

Lord, when the tempest rages, I need not fear,
For You, the Rock of Ages, Are always near.
Close by Your side abiding, I fear no foe,
For when Your hand is guiding, In peace I go.

17 continued

Lord, when the shadows lengthen And night has come,
I know that You will strengthen My steps toward home.
Then nothing can impede me, O blessed Friend;
So take my hand and lead me Unto the end.

Worship Leader

Pastor Harold Bender

Liturgist

Pastor Josh Grotelueschen

Lectors

Debbie Nier

Organist

Deaconess Carole King