

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
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March 5, 2025 † Ash Wednesday

St. John's Lutheran Church is a supporting congregation Calvary Lutheran High School, Jefferson City, 638-0228.

Today the paraments are black as we remember our sin which deserves death, the reason the Son of God became man and died – to forgive us and restore us to life.

The Lord's Supper is celebrated today. If you have been instructed and confirmed in the Lutheran faith and believe that with the bread and wine Christ gives you His true body and blood for the forgiveness of your sins and belong to the LCMS fellowship, you are invited to join in this blessed Sacrament. Gluten-free wafers are available; speak with Pastor or an elder prior to worship. (If you are desiring to commune for the first time at St. John's as a Lutheran or you are a non-Lutheran, **please see the pastor prior to the service**).

The Hand of the Lord Who Freely Gives

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.

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 in sincerity and truth.

Silence for reflection

Litany

- P** O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
- P** O Christ,
C **have mercy.**
- P** O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
- P** O Christ,
C **hear us.**
- P** God the Father in heaven,
C **have mercy.**
- P** God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
C **have mercy.**
- P** God the Holy Spirit,
C **have mercy.**
- P** Be gracious to us.
C **Spare us, good Lord.**
- P** Be gracious to us.
C **Help us, good Lord.**
- P** 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:
C **Help us, good Lord.**
- P** In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the day of judgment:
C **Help us, good Lord.**
- P** We poor sinners implore You
C **to hear us, O Lord.**
- P** 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:
C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- P** 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:
C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- P** To turn our hearts to You; to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers; and graciously to hear our prayers:
C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C **we implore You to hear us.**

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

C **have mercy.**

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

C **have mercy.**

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

C **grant us Your peace.**

P O Christ,

C **hear us.**

P O Lord,

C **have mercy.**

P O Christ,

C **have mercy.**

P O Lord,

C **have mercy. Amen.**

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.**

The Imposition of Ashes

The pastor and assistants receive ashes first, followed by the congregation. Using the right thumb, the pastor or an assistant places the ashes on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, saying:

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

After receiving the ashes, each person returns to his or her place in silence.

Confession and Absolution

419 Savior, When in Dust to Thee

- 1 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!

- 2 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!

- 3 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!

- 4 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, reascended Lord,
 Bending from Thy throne on high,
 Hear our penitential cry!

Text: Robert Grant, 1779–1838, alt.

Text: Public domain

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

- P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- C** **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.

- P** Let us then confess 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 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. 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.**

Service of the Word

Psalm

- P** Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love;
- C** **according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.**
- P** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!
- C** **For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.**
- P** Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight,
- C** **so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment.**
- 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.

C 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

A In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

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

C Lord, have mercy.

A 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.

C Lord, have mercy.

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

C Lord, have mercy.

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

C Amen.

Salutation and 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 Reading

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."

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual

[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, despis- | ing
the shame,*
and is seated at the right hand of the | throne of God.

Epistle

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

¹Working 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, 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.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse

C Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Holy Gospel

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. . . .

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.

418 O Lord, throughout These Forty Days

- 1 O Lord, throughout these forty days
You prayed and kept the fast;
Inspire repentance for our sin,
And free us from our past.
- 2 You strove with Satan, and You won;
Your faithfulness endured;
Lend us Your nerve, Your skill and trust
In God's eternal Word.
- 3 Though parched and hungry, yet You prayed
And fixed Your mind above;
So teach us to deny ourselves,
Since we have known God's love.
- 4 Be with us through this season, Lord,
And all our earthly days,
That when the final Easter dawns,
We join in heaven's praise.

Text: based on Claudia F. Hernaman, 1838–98; para. Gilbert E. Doan, 1930–2024

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Sermon

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.

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.

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.

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.

Offering

Offertory

C 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.

Service of the 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:

Sanctus

- C** **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

- P** 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 salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing 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 Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

- C** **Amen.**

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

P 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 ✠ 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 ✠ 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

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

Agnus Dei

C **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.

Sit

Distribution

The pastor and those who assist him receive the body and blood of Christ first and then distribute them to those who come to receive, saying:

Take, eat; this is the true body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins.

Amen.

Take, drink; this is the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

Amen.

In dismissing the communicants, the following is said:

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.

C **Amen.**

Distribution Hymns

615 When in the Hour of Deepest Need

- 1 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,
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 And so we come, O God, today
And all our woes before You lay;
For sorely tried, cast down, we stand,
Perplexed by fears on ev'ry hand.
- 5 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.

- 6 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.

Text: Paul Eber, 1511-69; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-78, alt.
Text: Public domain

843 “Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive”

- 1 “Forgive our sins as we forgive,”
You taught us, Lord, to pray;
But You alone can grant us grace
To live the words we say.
- 2 How can Your pardon reach and bless
The unforgiving heart
That broods on wrongs and will not let
Old bitterness depart?
- 3 In blazing light Your cross reveals
The truth we dimly knew:
What trivial debts are owed to us,
How great our debt to You!
- 4 Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls
And bid resentment cease;
Then, bound to all in bonds of love,
Our lives will spread Your peace.

Text: Rosamond E. Herklots, 1905-87, alt.
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Nunc Dimittis

- C** 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

- P** Let us pray.
We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us

through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; 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.

722 Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me

1 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.

2 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.

3 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.

Text: Julie von Hausmann, 1825–1901; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978, alt.
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