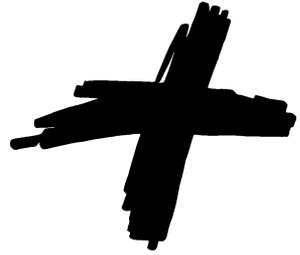


ASH WEDNESDAY

12:10 AND 6:00 P.M., FEBRUARY 17, 2021

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.



Welcome to guests and visitors! *This pamphlet will guide your worship today. The assembly’s parts are indicated by  and bold font. The vertical line in the left margin indicates when the assembly stands as each is able.*

About Holy Communion with Saint John Lutheran Church

“It is taught that the true body and blood of Christ are truly present under the form of bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper and are distributed and received there” (Augsburg Confession, Article X). “A person who has faith in these words, ‘given for you’ and ‘shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,’ is really worthy and well prepared.” “Forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament” (The Small Catechism, Part VI). “This church practices Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcomed to Communion” (The

Use of the Means of Grace, Principle 50).

The assembly gathers in silence.

The service begins with Psalm 51.

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ENTRANCE PSALM (51)

¹Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your lovingkindness;

☩ in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

²Wash me through and through from my wickedness,

☩ and cleanse me from my sin.

³For I know my transgressions,

☩ and my sin is ever before me.

⁴Against you only have I sinned

☩ and done what is evil in your sight.

⁵And so you are justified when you speak

☩ and upright in your judgment.

⁶Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,

☩ a sinner from my mother's womb.

⁷For behold, you look for truth deep within me,

☩ and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

⁸Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;

☩ wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.

⁹Make me hear of joy and gladness,

☩ that the body you have broken may rejoice.

¹⁰Hide your face from my sins,

☩ and blot out all my iniquities.

¹¹Create in me a clean heart, O God,

☩ and renew a right spirit within me.

¹²Cast me not away from your presence,

☩ and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹³Give me the joy of your saving help again

☩ and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

¹⁴I shall teach your ways to the wicked,

☩ and sinners shall return to you.

¹⁵Deliver me from death, O God,

**☩ and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,
O God of my salvation.**

¹⁶Open my lips, O Lord,

☩ and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

¹⁷Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,

☩ but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.

¹⁸The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;

☩ a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

¹⁹Be favorable and gracious to Zion,

☩ and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

²⁰Then you will be pleased with the appointed sacrifices,
with burnt-offerings and oblations;

☩ then shall they offer young bullocks upon your altar.

Glory 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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

☩ And also with you.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

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.

FIRST READING: 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— 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?'"

The word of the Lord.

☞ Thanks be to God.

PSALMODY: Psalm 103:8-14, 17a

⁸The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and of great kindness.

**☞ ⁹He will not always accuse us,
nor will he keep his anger forever.**

¹⁰He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

**☞ ¹¹For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.**

¹²As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our sins from us.

**☞ ¹³As a father cares for his children,
so does the Lord care for those who fear him.**

¹⁴For he himself knows whereof we are made; he remembers that we are but dust.

☪ ¹⁷But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures forever on those who fear him.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

^{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.

The word of the Lord.

☪ Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Be merciful to me, O God,
be merciful, for I have taken refuge in you;

☩ in the shadow of your wings will I take refuge.

He will send from heaven and save me;

☩ God will send forth his love and his faithfulness.

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

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

☩ Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

SERMON

Silence for reflection may follow the sermon.

MUSICAL OFFERING

The music is [Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee](#) (Aus Tiefer Not) (ELW # 600).

INVITATION TO LENT & CONFESSION OF SINS

After the address, the minister leads the following confession.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

The assembly kneels or sits.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

Most holy and merciful God,

**☩ 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.**

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.

☩ Have mercy on us, O God.

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.

☩ Have mercy on us, O God.

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

☩ Have mercy on us, O God.

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

☩ Have mercy on us, O God.

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

☩ Have mercy on us, O God.

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

☩ Have mercy on us, O God.

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

☩ Have mercy on us, O God.

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

☩ Have mercy on us, O God.

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

☩ Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Please listen for instructions about the imposition of ashes.

The rite will conclude:

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

☩ that we may show forth your glory in the world.

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

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

Amen.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

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.

☩ Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Each petition ends: Lord, in your mercy,

☩ hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude: We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

☩ Amen.

OFFERING PRESENTATION

Offerings are received at the door as one enters. The offering is presented for the work of Christ's Church, here and throughout the world.

OFFERING PRAYER

At the conclusion, the assembly responds:

☩ Amen.

OFFERING PSALM (30)

³You brought me up, O Lord, from the dead;

☩ you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.

⁴Sing to the Lord, you servants of his;

☩ give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness.

⁵For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye,

☩ his favor for a lifetime.

⁶Weeping may spend the night,

☩ but joy comes in the morning.

⁷While I felt secure, I said, "I shall never be disturbed.

☩ You, Lord, with your favor, made me as strong as the mountains."

⁸Then you hid your face,
☩ and I was filled with fear.

⁹I cried to you, O Lord;
☩ I pleaded with the Lord, saying,

¹⁰“What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit?
☩ Will the dust praise you or declare your faithfulness?

¹¹Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me;
☩ O Lord, be my helper.”

Glory 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.

The table is set.

DIALOGUE

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.

PREFACE

The minister continues, concluding: we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (SANCTUS)

**☩ Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might:
Heav'n 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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ . . .

. . . with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, both 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

☩ Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION SONG (AGNUS DEI)

**☩ 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, grant us peace.**

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Please remain seated where you are. The communion elements will be brought to you. The host is received in your open hand. The wine will be taken by you from an individual glass. Carefully place your empty glass on the pew until end of worship.

BLESSING & POST-COMMUNION PSALM (1)

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

☩ Amen.

¹Happy are they who have not walked
in the counsel of the wicked,

**☩ nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!**

²Their delight is in the law of the Lord,

☩ and they meditate on his law day and night.

³They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither;

☩ everything they do shall prosper.

⁴It is not so with the wicked;

☩ they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

⁵Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright
when judgment comes,

☩ nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.

⁶For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,

☩ but the way of the wicked is doomed.

Glory 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.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

At the conclusion, the assembly responds:

☩ Amen.

BLESSING

Response after the blessing:

☩ Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

At the conclusion, the assembly responds:

☩ Amen.

DISMISSAL

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.

☩ Thanks be to God.

Truth on Your Forehead

Today, Ash Wednesday, is about letting the truth come all the way to the surface: there is dirt. Social media won't show it to you, you likely won't find it displayed in holiday greetings, and as a result you might be led to believe that you're the only one who has any dirt mucking up your life. But this is a lie.

There is dirt in our world, soot beneath the surface of every neat and tidy human story, dust collecting in the lives of perfect-seeming families, ash polluting the precious air we breathe. Perhaps you yourself have hidden your dirt in success, work, or volunteering. Perhaps your energy has gone into propping up a meticulous self-image so that others might not know about and might not judge your failings, your sin, your humanity. On Ash Wednesday, we call that way of hiding what it is: a false life lived in the service of self-image. On Ash Wednesday, that way of living is buried so that we can actually live.

Today the truth comes out: there is dirt, and it is everywhere! But what's more, our God desires our dirt. Our earthy grime does not disqualify us in God's eyes. In fact, in the eyes of a God who first made us out of dirt, it qualifies us to be recreated!

So today we collectively give up fasting or giving offerings or praying or doing anything else for the sake of covering up the grime. Instead, we wear our dirt on our foreheads, because we trust what our God can do with dust. In doing so, we are unburdened from the work of serving the relentless master that is our self-image and we begin the journey to freedom. We move not by what will make us look a certain way but by the callings of our hearts, imperfect though they may be, because this is where our treasure truly is.