

*Ash Wednesday*

AND TO DUST YOU SHALL RETURN



REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE DUST

© Laura R. Norton

## Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

7:00 p.m.

**INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY**

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.

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

*The assembly gathers in silence.*

**HYMN**

*Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church*

ELW 321

**GREETING**

*The assembly stands. The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.*

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

**INVITATION TO LENT**

*The assembly is seated. The presiding minister invites the assembly into the discipline of Lent.*

P: Brothers and sisters in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus’ Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God’s mercy. God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love one another, and to live in harmony with all creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that 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 judgement, but to turn to him and live.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to struggle against evil and resist whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline of self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love.

## **CONFESSiON OF SiN**

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, who removes our guilt  
and blots out all offenses.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Gracious God,

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

P: For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:  
Gracious God,

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

P: For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:  
Gracious God,

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

P: For failing to recognize your coming reign,  
and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

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

P: For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,  
and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

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

P: For disregarding voices from the margin,  
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world:  
Gracious God,

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

P: For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,  
and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life:  
Gracious God,

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

P: God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.  
Through faith, the free gift of God,  
you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.  
In the name of <sup>☩</sup> Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.  
The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead  
dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts,  
and gives you life and peace.

C: Amen.

### **IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

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.

### **DURING THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

**HYMN**    *Lord Jesus, Think on Me*  
            *Our Father, We Have Wandered*  
            *God Loved the World*

**ELW 599**  
**ELW 606**  
**ELW 323**

*People may come forward to receive the ashes. Ministers mark the  
forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:*

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

*When all have returned to their places.*

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

**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.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

**C: 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.**

## WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

### **FIRST READING:**

### **JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17**

*Because of the coming day of the LORD, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community declares that God is gracious and asks God to spare the people lest the nations doubt God's power to save.*

R: A reading from Joel, the second chapter.

<sup>1</sup>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—

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>12</sup>Yet even now, says the LORD,

return to me with all your heart,

with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

<sup>13</sup>rend 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.

<sup>14</sup>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?

<sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion;

sanctify a fast;

call a solemn assembly;

<sup>16</sup>gather 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.

<sup>17</sup>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?'"

The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**RESPONSIVE READING:**

**PSALM 51:1-17**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

**<sup>2</sup>Wash me through and through from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

**<sup>4</sup>Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your  
sight; so you are justified when you speak and right in your  
judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my mother's womb.

**<sup>6</sup>Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

**<sup>8</sup>Let me hear joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

**<sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

**<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways to offenders,  
and sinners shall be restored to you.

**<sup>14</sup>Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

<sup>16</sup>**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.  
You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;  
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

## **SECOND READING:**

## **2 CORINTHIANS 5:20B--6:10**

*The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.*

R: A reading from 2 Corinthians, the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> chapters.

<sup>20b</sup>We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup>As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup>For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,

and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

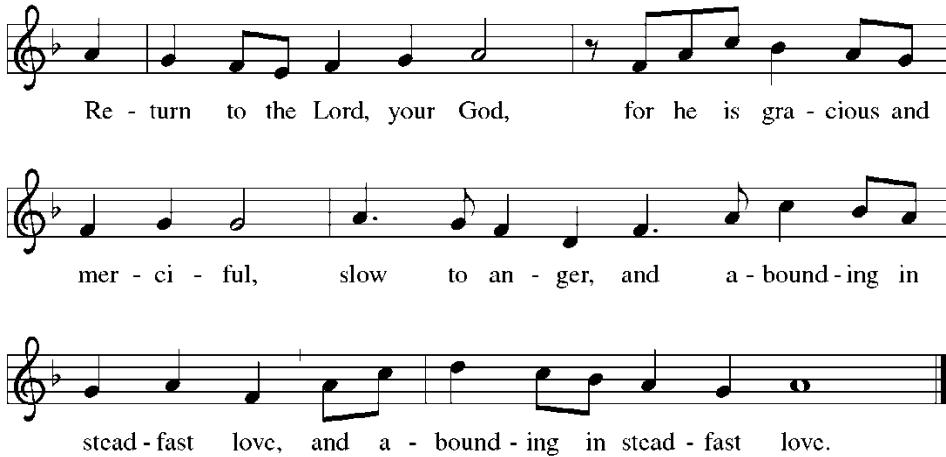
See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! <sup>3</sup>We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup>truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.*



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

## GOSPEL:

## MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commands almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.*

P: The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

P: [Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“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.

<sup>2</sup>“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. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“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. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>“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. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>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.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON**

**Pastor Tim Miller**

*Silence for reflection follows the sermon.*

**HYMN**

**Savior, When in Dust to You**

**ELW 601**

*The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.*

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

R: Reconciled by God’s mercy and sustained by God’s presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*A brief silence.*

R: Guide your church, O God. Accompany all Christians in this season of repentance, and renew our faith in the riches of grace you give to us in baptism. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: Heal this earth, O God. Satisfy the needs of every parched place, every diverse ecosystem, every suffering creature. Though all return to dust, grant beauty and purpose to each living thing. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: Restore the nations, O God. Let your healing spring up quickly across the world. Give all in authority the will to loose the bonds of injustice and let any who are oppressed go free. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: Deliver your people, O God. Comfort any whose hearts are rent by grief, uphold any who are sick, *especially those we name at this time* (*Pause for 10 seconds for people to be named*). Bring food to those who hunger, and give housing to all without shelter. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: Bless this assembly, O God. Reconcile us to one another and to you. Strengthen our resolve to fast from evil, open our hands in sharing, and quicken our prayer. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: Hold us forever, O God. We thank you for all who now know their treasure in heaven, and for all who on earth proclaimed your abounding, steadfast love. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**C: Amen.**

## MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**SR. CHOIR:**

*Create in Me a Heart of Love*

**T. McKibben**

**OFFERTORY**

*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise him, all creatures here below;

Praise him above, ye heav'ly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

P: O God, maker of heaven and earth,

your steadfast love embraces all creation.

You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth  
and bring forth its bounty.

Through these gifts of bread and wine,  
draw us into the death and life of your Son,  
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.  
We ask this in Jesus' name.

**C: Amen.**

## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

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 our thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts  
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,  
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,  
we may come to the fullness of your grace.  
And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san - na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P: Blessed are you, O God of the universe.

    Your mercy is everlasting  
    and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness  
to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup  
we remember our Lord's passover from death to life  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**C: Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

P: O God of resurrection and new life:

    Pour out your Holy Spirit on us  
    and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
    Bless this feast.

    Grace our table with your presence.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.  
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.  
Breathe new life into us.  
Send us forth,  
burning with justice, peace, and love.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: With your holy ones of all times and places,  
with the earth and all its creatures,  
with sun and moon and stars,  
we praise you, O God,  
blessed and holy Trinity,  
now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

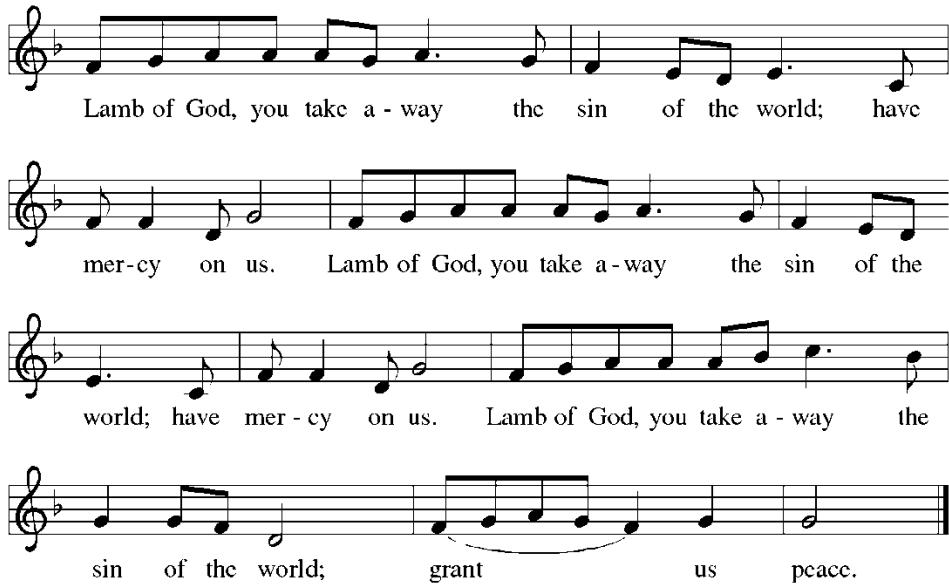
**C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: Come to the table.  
Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

**Holy Communion:** If you prefer gluten-free bread, please let the pastor know. If you prefer grape juice, please let the communion assistant know. If you prefer to not receive or have children who have not yet received, please let the pastor know and he will offer a blessing.

## COMMUNION SONG



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace.

## HYMNS:

*What Wondrous Love Is This  
Just As I Am, without One Plea  
Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me*

ELW 666  
ELW 592  
ELW 767

## TABLE BLESSING

*The assembly stands to receive the blessing.*

P: May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

Now, Lord, you let your ser-vant go in peace: your word has been ful -

filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre-pared in the

sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: a light to re-veal you to the na - tions

and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.

Now, Lord, you let your ser - vant go in peace.

### **PRAYER**

P: God of our salvation,

we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,  
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.

Through the body and blood of your Son,  
may we become Christ's body in the world,  
bearing witness to your love for all creation,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

### **SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

### **BLESSING**

*The presiding minister proclaims God's 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.

C: Amen.

### **HYMN**

*Bless Now, O God, the Journey*

**ELW 326**

## **DISMISSAL**

P: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

## **POSTLUDE:**

### ***My Heart Rejoices***

**E. Broughton**

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**WE ARE GRATEFUL YOU'VE JOINED US ON THIS ASH WEDNESDAY.** As we turn our hearts toward Jesus and the journey to the cross, we remember that God meets us with mercy at every step. May our worship inspire repentance, faith and deeper trust in God's unfailing love.

**LENTEN SERVICES** will begin on Wednesdays at 6:45 p.m., Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> thru March 25<sup>th</sup>. Join us beforehand at 6 p.m. for a light supper.

## **The Chosen, Season 4**

- The viewing of *The Chosen, Season 4* will begin at Faith Lutheran Church Lounge or Sanctuary on **Wednesday, February 18th at 5 p.m.** and will continue Wednesdays at 5 p.m. through Lent.

Questions should be directed to Cheryl Paeth at 419-205-3659.

## **ASSISTING US TONIGHT**

**Pastor:** Tim Miller

**Organist:** Darla Brown

**Sr. Choir Director:** Darla Brown **Choir Accompanist:** Amy Wagner

**Lector:** Barb Kocsis

**Acolyte:** Karly Paeth

**Greeters:** Ron & Nancy Root

**Communion Assistants:** Amy Wagner & Randy Brown

**Counters:** Becky Dymond\* & Dave Kocsis

**Altar Guild:** Judi Neill, Heidi Tooman, Ann Waggoner