

ASH WEDNESDAY
February 14, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.

It was decided at a very early date that a special time of penance for those guilty of a serious sin (i.e. adultery, fornication, blasphemy, idolatry, witchcraft, etc.) should start at the beginning of Lent – Ash Wednesday. In the Early Christian Church, people guilty of such sins were required to make public confession and show their sorrow. Then they were granted full pardon in a public ceremony on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. Penitents had to wear a special coarse garment (like burlap) during the forty-day Lenten season. They were sprinkled with ashes and could not bathe during their time of penance. Their stench and filth were to be a reminder of the filth of their sin. After they had donned the garment and were sprinkled with ashes, they were expelled from the church in a dramatic rite. Jesus used the symbolism of ashes when He spoke against the Galilean cities, **“If the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes!”** (Matthew 11:21) The rite of expulsion and public penance began to disappear at the end of the first millennium (about the year A.D. 1000), but the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday has been retained for all penitent sinners as a reminder of their sins and the great cost at which those sins were forgiven: the blood of God’s only Son. The ashes are usually placed on the forehead in the sign of the cross while a blessing or Scripture verse is spoken. Ash Wednesday has also been held as a day of fasting in the Christian Church.

Prelude “Three Reflections on “Southwell”

David Lasky

Call to Worship

P: Create in me a clean heart, O God,

C: Put a new and right spirit *within* me.

P: Cast me not away from your presence,

C: And take not your Holy Spirit from me.

P: Deliver me from guilt, O God, You God of my salvation.

C: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

P: For You have no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, You would not be pleased.

C: The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

Opening Prayer

P: Most Holy God, Your Son came to save sinners. We come to this season of repentance confessing our unworthiness, asking for new and honest hearts, and the healing power of Your forgiveness. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

Opening Hymn “Forgive, O Lord, Your People” (to the tune of “Beneath the Cross of Jesus”)

**Forgive, O Lord, Your people, forgive us all our sins,
May they be burned to ashes, like dust upon the wind.
And vanish in the bright new dawn of Your eternal love,
That banishes our darkness and lifts our hearts above.**

**Our Lenten journey calls us, to follow on Christ’s way;
Repented, changed, forgiven, we look to God’s new day.
Our old ways left behind us now, so full of storm and strife,
We follow Christ our Savior, from ashes on to life. Amen.**

First Lesson

Joel 2:12-19

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.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

P: **Thanks be to God.**

Second Lesson

1 John 1:5-10

⁵This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *oursins* and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 6:16-18

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

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

¹⁶[Jesus said:] "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.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon Hymn #425 – "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

Sermon "Confess"

Offering of our Tithes and Gifts

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Litany of Repentance

P: Out of the depths, we cry to Thee, O Lord!

C: Lord, hear our voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of our pleas!

P: If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities and sins, Lord, who could stand?

C: But there is forgiveness with You!

P: "Yet, even now," says the Lord, "return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning; and tear your hearts and not your garments."

C: In repentance, in confession, we return to the Lord, our God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

C: We trust in the Lord! For with the Lord is steadfast love, with Him is redemption.

Questions for Self-Examination

1. *Do you believe that you are a sinner?*

Yes, I believe it; I am a sinner.

2. *How do you know this?*

From the Ten Commandments; these I have not kept.

3. *Are you also sorry for your sins?*

Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

4. *What have you deserved of God by your sins?*

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation.

(Romans 6:21, 23)

5. *Do you also hope to be saved?*

Yes, such is my hope.

6. *In whom, then, do you trust?*

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

7. *Who is Christ?*

The Son of God, true God and man.

8. *How many Gods are there?*

Only one; but there are three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

9. *What, then, has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?*

He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

10. *Did the Father also die for you?*

He did not; for the Father is God only, the Holy Ghost likewise; but the Son is true God and true man; He died for me and shed His blood for me.

11. *How do you know this?*

From the Holy Gospel and from the words of the Sacrament; and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.

12. *How do those words read?*

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

After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

13. *You believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?*

Yes, I believe it.

14. *What induces you to believe this?*

The word of Christ, "Take, eat, this is My body; Drink all of it, this is My blood."

15. *What ought we to do when we eat His body and drink His blood, as He taught us: "This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me"?*

We ought to remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: "This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

16. *Why ought we to remember and proclaim His death?*

That we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins but Christ, true God and man; and that we may learn to look with terror at our sins, and to regard them as great indeed, and to find joy and comfort in Him alone, and thus be saved through such faith.

17. *What was it that moved Him to die and make satisfaction for your sins?*

His great love to His Father and to me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 6; Galatians 2; Ephesians 5.

18. *Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?*

That I may learn to believe that Christ died for my sin out of great love, as before said; and that I may also learn of Him to love God and my neighbor.

The Distribution of Holy Communion

As you approach, it would be helpful if the young people who do take Communion hold out one or two hands, palm upward, as an indication that they should receive the wafer. Young people who do not take Communion should keep hands crossed or palms down or at their side. If you are unable to come to the Communion rail and wish to take Communion at your seat, please notify an usher when your pew is being directed to the Communion rail.

Communion Hymns

“The Mercy of the Lord Adore” (sung to the tune of #733, “O God, Our Help in Ages Past”)

**1) The mercy of the Lord adore
Christ’s great compassion see;
Our sins upon the cross He bore
That we might righteous be.**

**3) His broken, blood outpoured
Become a token sure;
The loving kindness of the Lord
Forever shall endure.**

**2) Although the grave that beckons
me
Shall turn me back to dust,
Yet in my flesh my God I’ll see
In whom I place my trust.**

**4) No care my confidence can drown;
My gracious God forgives!
No grave can keep this body down,
For my Redeemer lives!**

#419 “Savior, When in Dust to Thee”

Imposition of Ashes

Confession and Absolution

P: Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord’s Passion and Resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for Easter by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism.

It was also a time in which those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful, were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and forgiveness set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to be renewed through repentance and faith.

I invite you, therefore, to the observance of a holy Lent by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s Holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, let us confess our sins, asking our Father for strength to persevere in our Lenten discipline.

Most merciful God,

C: **We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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 neighbor as ourselves. 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: Dear friends in Christ, let us ask our Father to bless us as we use these ashes as an outward sign of repentance.

(Pause for silent prayer.)

P: Lord, bless the sinner who asks for Your forgiveness and bless all those who receive these ashes. May we keep this Lenten season in preparation for the joy of Easter. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Ash Wednesday Hymn (to the tune of #449 “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”)

**1) Remember, earth-born mortal,
The dust from which you came,
And know that life’s last portal
Returns you to the same!
Let ashes tell the story,
From dust its lesson learn:
Beyond life’s fleeting glory
To dust you shall return!**

**2) O God, You once did fashion
Our lives from earth’s frail dust
Through Jesus’ cross and Passion
Help us Your grace to trust.
For Christ was born of Mary
Our mortal dust to share,
Our sin and guilt to carry,
Our ransom to prepare.**

**3) Like flow’rs cast in the furnace,
Our lives are quickly spent.
To dust, O God, You turn us
And call us to repent:
“Turn back, O mortals, grieving
O’er your iniquity,
That steadfast love receiving,
You may my mercy see.”**

**4) Let ashes be the token
Of heartfelt penitence
And of your promise spoken
To raise our bodies hence.
Have mercy on us mortals!
Let faith within us burn,
That even from death’s portals
We may to life return!**

Imposition of Ashes

Please come forward to receive the Imposition of Ashes. After receiving the ashes, symbolizing the death your sins deserve, you may:

- 1) Kneel at the altar railing to pray
- 2) Return to your seat for prayer and meditation
- 3) Leave – in silence

Please “let all mortal flesh keep silence” in the sanctuary and the narthex (lobby), out of respect for those still praying and worshiping. Go in the peace that God forgives all your sins.

St. John's Lutheran Church

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Our Sunday Worship - Services are at 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday at both services.

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class both begin at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesdays in Lent – 7:00 p.m., with dinner at 5:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday Communion Worship at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday Worship at 7:00 p.m.

***Easter Sunday Communion Worship at 8:30 a.m. (The Well) and 10:45 a.m. with
breakfast in between***

A Great Place to Grow in Christ

*As a part of our outreach ministry, we have a
Preschool/Pre-K program and Kindergarten through 8th grade.
All programs/grades have full-time care available.*

Pastor Thomas Clocker, 301-732-9203

Mark Edmiston, Principal

Tom Baldwin, Director of Admissions and Community Relations

Sonia Davidson, Director of Preschool

Michael Zeoli, Director of Music for Contemporary Worship

Frances Burmeister, Director of Music for Traditional Worship