

Ash Wednesday

February 26 at 7pm



WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

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.

Call to Worship

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

C: Renew a 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

First Lesson Joel 2:12-19

¹² "Now, therefore," says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."

¹³ So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the Lord your God, For He *is* gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. ¹⁴ Who knows *if* He will turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him— A grain offering and a drink offering For the Lord your God?

¹⁵ Blow the [trumpet](#) in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly;

¹⁶ Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes; Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room. ¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, Weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, "Spare Your people, O Lord, And do not give Your heritage to reproach, That the nations should [rule](#) over them. Why should they say among the peoples, "Where *is* their God?" "

¹⁸ Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, And pity His people.

¹⁹ The Lord will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

**Hymn of Response: “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.**

Second Lesson 1 Kings 19:1-4, 9-13 (Sermon Text)

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” ³ And when he saw *that*, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which *belongs* to Judah, and left his servant there.

⁴ But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a ^a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers!”

⁹ And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord *came* to him, and He said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁰ So he said, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

¹¹ Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord.” And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, *but* the Lord *was* not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, *but* the Lord *was* not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, *but* the Lord *was* not in the fire; and after the fire ^a **still small voice**.

¹³ So it was, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel: Matthew 6:16-18

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 6th chapter.

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

¹⁶ “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the ^[a]hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you ^[b]openly.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon Hymn: #584 “Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing”

Sermon: “A Still Small Voice”

Offering of our Tithes and Gifts

Offertory Anthem: “Parce Domine” Gregorian Chant Mode I arr. Richard E. Barber

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 (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!

#419 “Savior, When in Dust to Thee”

#923 “Almighty Father, Bless the Word”

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.

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.

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 worshipping. Go in the peace that God forgives all your sins.

Join us on Wednesday’s during Lent – March 4 – April 1, 2020 at 7:00pm for service



Our Sunday Worship - Services are at 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
*Holy Communion is celebrated at 8:30 a.m. on the first and third Sundays,
at 10:45 a.m. on the second and fourth Sundays, and at both services
if there is a fifth Sunday in the month.*

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

Wednesdays in Lent – 7:00 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.

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

2415 Silas Creek Parkway

Winston-Salem, NC 27103

336-725-1651

www.stjohnsww.com