

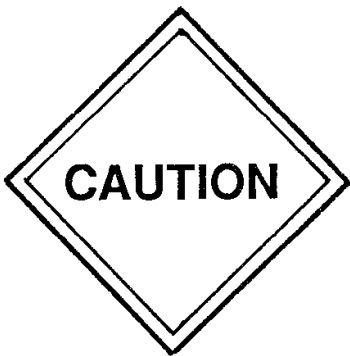
About Ash Wednesday and Lent

Every year at Easter we celebrate with joy our redemption and renewal through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The season of Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to listen for the Spirit of God speaking, calling us to renew our faith in this mystery.

Ash Wednesday is the special observance of the first day of Lent. We begin our journey through Lent by acknowledging our need for repentance and for the love and forgiveness shown to us in Jesus Christ.

As a sign of your repentance, you will be invited to come forward, if you desire, to receive the imposition of ashes. Pastor Craig will trace the sign of the cross on your forehead with ashes, as an ancient symbol of humility and grief.

All are invited, in the name of Christ, to observe a Holy Lent, by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by practicing works of love, and by reading and reflecting on God's Holy Word.



CAUTION: Mixing water with the ashes can create a mildly caustic reaction that may irritate your skin. To remove the ashes from your forehead, rub them off with a towel (not moistened with water) followed by some olive or vegetable oil to help remove the residue. For your convenience, there are small towels and bowls of oil in the narthex.

ASH WEDNESDAY
February 14, 2024

PRELUDE “Just As I Am”

arr. by Fred Bock

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Craig Alwin

Ringing of the Bell and entrance of the Light of Christ

CALL TO REPENTANCE

Jolene Schry

Blow the trumpet in Zion!

Sound the alarm on God’s holy mountain.

Call all the people together—young and old.

**For the day of the Lord is coming,
a day unlike any other.**

Even now, God says, return to me with all your heart;
change your life, not just your clothes.

Let us return to our God, and to God’s ways.

**For our God is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and full of compassion and mercy.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and penitence, and a reminder that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life;

through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

(A period of silence will follow. Those who wish to do so, may come forward to have the sign of the cross placed on their foreheads or hands. The ashes are from palm branches used at Palm Sunday services in the past, mixed with oil).

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” – Gen 3:19

OPENING PRAYER

Jolene Schry

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of tenderness, and strengthen us to face our mortality, that we may reach with confidence for your mercy; in Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

* HYMN GTG 442 “Just As I Am”

Cantors, Carol Wetzel and Nancy Pitzen

LITANY OF CONFESSION Psalm 51:1-17

Eddie Hayes

Have mercy on me, God, according to your faithful love!

Wipe away my wrongdoings according to your great compassion!

**Wash me completely clean of my guilt;
purify me from my sin!**

Because I know my wrongdoings,
my sin is always right in front of me.

I’ve sinned against you—you alone.

I’ve committed evil in your sight.

That’s why you are justified when you render your verdict,
completely correct when you issue your judgment.

**Yes, I was born in guilt, in sin,
from the moment my mother conceived me.**

And yes, you want truth in the most hidden places;
you teach me wisdom in the most secret space.

**Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean;
wash me and I will be whiter than snow.**

Let me hear joy and celebration again;
let the bones you crushed rejoice once more.

**Hide your face from my sins;
wipe away all my guilty deeds!**

Create a clean heart for me, God;
put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!

Please don’t throw me out of your presence;

please don't take your holy spirit away from me.

Return the joy of your salvation to me
and sustain me with a willing spirit.

**Then I will teach wrongdoers your ways,
and sinners will come back to you.**

Deliver me from violence, God, God of my salvation,
so that my tongue can sing of your righteousness.

**Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.**

You don't want sacrifices.

If I gave an entirely burned offering,
you wouldn't be pleased.

A broken spirit is my sacrifice, God.

You won't despise a heart, God, that is broken and crushed.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life." Know that you are forgiven, reconciled, accepted, and loved.

***HYMN 627 "I Love You, Lord" (sing twice)**

OLD TESTAMENT READING: ISAIAH 58:1-12

Cheryl Clarenbach & Pete Wills

Shout loudly; don't hold back;
raise your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their crime,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

**They seek me day after day,
desiring knowledge of my ways
like a nation that acted righteously,
that didn't abandon their God.**

They ask me for righteous judgments,

wanting to be close to God.

“Why do we fast and you don’t see;
why afflict ourselves and you don’t notice?”

**Yet on your fast day you do whatever you want,
and oppress all your workers.**

**You quarrel and brawl, and then you fast;
you hit each other violently with your fists.**

You shouldn’t fast as you are doing today
if you want to make your voice heard on high.

**Is this the kind of fast I choose,
a day of self-affliction,
of bending one’s head like a reed
and of lying down in mourning clothing and ashes?
Is this what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?**

Isn’t this the fast I choose:

releasing wicked restraints, untying the ropes of a yoke,
setting free the mistreated,
and breaking every yoke?

**Isn’t it sharing your bread with the hungry
and bringing the homeless poor into your house,
covering the naked when you see them,
and not hiding from your own family?**

Then your light will break out like the dawn,
and you will be healed quickly.

**Your own righteousness will walk before you,
and the Lord’s glory will be your rear guard.**

Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and God will say, “I’m here.”

**If you remove the yoke from among you,
the finger-pointing, the wicked speech;
if you open your heart to the hungry,
and provide abundantly for those who are afflicted,**

**your light will shine in the darkness,
and your gloom will be like the noon.**

The Lord will guide you continually
and provide for you, even in parched places.
He will rescue your bones.

**You will be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water that won't run dry.**

They will rebuild ancient ruins on your account;
the foundations of generations past you will restore.

**You will be called Mender of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Livable Streets.**

GOSPEL READING:

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Be careful that you don't practice your religion in front of people to draw their attention. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

Whenever you give to the poor, don't blow your trumpet as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets so that they may get praise from people. I assure you, that's the only reward they'll get. But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that you may give to the poor in secret. Your Father who sees what you do in secret will reward you.

When you pray, don't be like hypocrites. They love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners so that people will see them. I assure you, that's the only reward they'll get. But when you pray, go to your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees what you do in secret will reward you.

And when you fast, don't put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They distort their faces so people will know they are fasting. I assure you that they have their reward. When you fast, brush your hair and wash your face. Then you won't look

like you are fasting to people, but only to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Stop collecting treasures for your own benefit on earth, where moth and rust eat them and where thieves break in and steal them. Instead, collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don't eat them and where thieves don't break in and steal them. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

MESSAGE

"Where Your Treasure Is"

Rev. Dr. Craig Alwin

*** AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – Apostles Creed (Ecumenical Version)**

We believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING 518 "Your Only Son" duet vs., congregation joins in refrain.

DOXOLOGY GTG 607 "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER (*using "Debts" and "Debtors"*)

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.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

*** HYMN GTG 166 “Lord Who Throughout these Forty Years”**

***BENEDICTION**

***Sending Song GTG 540 “Farewell, Good Friends”**

POSTLUDE “St. Flavian”

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