



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

March 5, 2025

PRELUDE “Tallis’ Canon”

arr. by John A. Behnke and Paul Manz

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Craig Alwin

ENTRANCE OF THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

OPENING PRAYER

Wendy Peachey, liturgist

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 675 “All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night”**

*(verse 1, 2 times, 1st time together, 2nd time in round, lectern side starts the round)
Linda D., Katy J., Joanne M., Phyllis M., Mary Ellen M., Jonathan P., Nancy P., and Carol W.-Cantors*

OLD TESTAMENT READING: ISAIAH 58:1-12

Confirmands

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.

***HYMN GTG 417 "Lord Jesus, Think on Me"**

Linda D., Katy J., Joanne M., Phyllis M., Jonathan P., Nancy P., and Carol W.-Cantors

LITANY OF CONFESSION Psalm 51:1-17

Confirmands

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 GOD'S GRACE (Romans 10:8-13, The Message)

Dick S.

The word that saves is right here, as near as the tongue in your mouth, as close as the heart in your chest. It's the word of faith that welcomes God to go to work and set things right for us. This is the core of our preaching. Say the welcoming word to God—"Jesus is my Master"—embracing, body and soul, God's work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That's it. You're not "doing" anything; you're simply calling out to God, trusting him to do it for you. That's salvation. With your whole being you embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud: **"God has set everything right between him and me!"**

Scripture reassures us, "No one who trusts God like this—heart and soul—will ever regret it." It's exactly the same no matter what a person's religious background may be: the same God for all of us, acting the same incredibly generous way to everyone who calls out for help. **"Everyone who calls, 'Help, God!' gets help."**

***HYMN GTG 1 “Holy, Holy, Holy”**

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10

Jolene S.

So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ’s representatives, “Be reconciled to God!” God caused the one who didn’t know sin to be sin for our sake so that through him we could become the righteousness of God. Since we work together with him, we are also begging you not to receive the grace of God in vain. He says, *I listened to you at the right time, and I helped you on the day of salvation.* Look, now is the right time! Look, now is the day of salvation!

We don’t give anyone any reason to be offended about anything so that our ministry won’t be criticized. Instead, we commend ourselves as ministers of God in every way. We did this with our great endurance through problems, disasters, and stressful situations. We went through beatings, imprisonments, and riots. We experienced hard work, sleepless nights, and hunger. We displayed purity, knowledge, patience, and generosity. We served with the Holy Spirit, genuine love, telling the truth, and God’s power. We carried the weapons of righteousness in our right hand and our left hand. We were treated with honor and dishonor and with verbal abuse and good evaluation. We were seen as both fake and real, as unknown and well known, as dying—and look, we are alive! We were seen as punished but not killed, as going through pain but always happy, as poor but making many rich, and as having nothing but owning everything.

MESSAGE

“Be reconciled to God!”

Rev. Dr. Craig Alwin

CALL TO REPENTANCE (Joel 2, 1-2, 12-16a, CEB)

Wendy Peachey, LITURGIST

Blow the horn in Zion;

give a shout on my holy mountain!

Let all the people of the land tremble,

for the day of the Lord is coming.

It is near—

a day of darkness and no light,

a day of clouds and thick darkness!

Spare your people, Lord.

Yet even now, says the Lord,

return to me with all your hearts,

with fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow;

Tear your hearts

and not your clothing.

Return to the Lord your God,

for he is merciful and compassionate,

very patient, full of faithful love,

and ready to forgive.

Spare your people, Lord.

Who knows whether he will have a change of heart

and leave a blessing behind him,

a grain offering and a drink offering

for the Lord your God?

Blow the horn in Zion;

demand a fast;

request a special assembly.

Gather the people;

prepare a holy meeting;

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes remind us of our mortality and penitence and the call to live in community, serving one another in your name. May they teach us again that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

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

(A period of silence as we receive the ashes. 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).

***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 “Jesus, Savior”

by Hugh S. Livingston, Jr.

Linda D., Katy J., Joanne M., Phyllis M., MaryEllen McM., Jonathan P., Nancy P., and Carol W.-Cantors

***OFFERTORY GTG 581 “Glory Be to the Father”**

Sacrament of Holy Communion

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S TABLE

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

LORD’S PRAYER *(1988 English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) version)*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD – (words of institution)

SHARING OF THE MEAL

The Bread of Life, The Cup of Salvation

Hymn During Communion GTG 507 “Come to the Table of Grace”

PRAYER OF THANKS

***HYMN GTG 675 “All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night”**

(verse 1, 2 times, 1st time together, 2nd time in round, lectern side starts the round)

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***BENEDICTION**

***SENDING SONG GTG 166 “Lord Who Throughout these Forty Days”**

POSTLUDE “St. Flavian”

arr. by Healey Willan

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