

St. John Lutheran Church



Ash Wednesday Service
March 5, 2025 • 7:00 pm

ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Rev. Tammy P. Harmer

Deacon Betsey Eley & Deacon Ken Weaver

ASH WEDNESDAY • MARCH 5, 2025

Prelude

Welcome

Invitation to Lent

Friends 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. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Confession and Forgiveness

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

In the name of God, who makes a way in the wilderness, walks with us, and guides us in our pilgrimage.

Amen.

Holy One,

**We confess that we have wandered far from you: We have not trusted your promises,
We have ignored your prophets in our own day, We have squandered our inheritance of grace,
We have failed to recognize you in our midst. Have mercy on us! Forgive us and turn us again to you.
Teach us to follow in your ways, Assure us again of your love, And help us to love our neighbor.
Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,

The Word draws near to you. And all who call out to God shall be saved.

In Jesus, God comes to you again and again and gathers you under wings of love.

In ✝ Jesus' name, your sins are forgiven God journeys with you and teaches you how to live in love.

Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

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. **Amen.**

People may come forward to receive the ashes.

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

P/D Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
C **that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

P/D 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

Let us pray:

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

First Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

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—² 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 . . .

¹² Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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?'"

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalms 51:1-17

Response: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

² **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

⁴ **Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.**

⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty, a when my mother conceived me.

⁶ **You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. R**

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸ **Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. R**

⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.**

¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

¹² **Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. R**

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

¹⁴ **Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.**

¹⁵ O LORD, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁶ **For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.**

¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. **R**

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:1-10

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

^{6:1} As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ² 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! ³ We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷ truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸ in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹ as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything..

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation (Lenten)

**We are turning, Lord, to hear you; you are merciful and kind —
slow to anger, rich in blessing, and with love to us inclined.**

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The holy gospel according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

"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.

² "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.

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

⁵ "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.

⁶ 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.

¹⁶“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. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so 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.

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

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: Lord, Jesus Think of Me (#599)

Prayers of Intercession

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

God of our journeys, we pray for the church as the season of Lent begins. Guide your people in spiritual practices and preparation for baptism. Strengthen communities of faith in discipleship and witness for the sake of the gospel.

God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of creation, we pray for the earth. As you once brought forth life from the dust, breathe healing and renewal into all places where ecosystems are stretched and strained. Nurture organic cycles of life, death, and rebirth.

God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the nations, we pray for an end to wars and occupations that reduce communities to ash. Turn leaders away from fearful decision-making, and lead all people into the justice and compassion of your reign.

God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the suffering, we pray for all who live with any pain (especially). Comfort people living with chronic or terminal illnesses, addictions, or anxiety. Grant that all who dwell in the dust of grief may know your presence there.

God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer..**

God of community, we pray for those who accompany the dying: for first responders, health care and hospice workers, chaplains, and those who facilitate burials of the dead. Sustain them as they serve their neighbors in life and death with dignity and care.

God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer..**

We pray for peace throughout the world: in our nation, Ukraine, Israel, Gaza, Sudan, and all war-torn areas.

God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the cross, we give thanks for those who have completed their lives on earth and have returned to you. Strengthen us with the promise that within the ashes of death are the seeds of resurrection life. God, in your

God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life. **Amen.**

Offering

Prayer

Let us pray.

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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 forever.

Amen.

Sending Hymn: Softly and Tenderly (#608)

Blessing

Dismissal

Postlude

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following in your prayers for healing:

Jen Bailey	Indie Fisher	Valerie Hoffmann	Kimberly Rickert	Beverly Warming
Brian Byrnes	Rhea Fryor	Rebecca Livingston	Ashley Rosser	Christopher Weaver
Randy Cantoral	Bob Garner	Joanne McVelli	Finn Schureman	Ryan Williams
Janet Cappuccio	Heidi Goff	Melanie Miles	Frank Siderio III	Helen Yezusko
Sandra DeRitis	Angela Guedes	Kent Montford	Eric Sprengel	Ashley Zenzola
Helen Dominic	Stan Harmer	Sue Murphy	Janice Stronski	Bob Zielsdorf
Rosemarie Doucette	Ann Henning	Doris Piech	George Vaneman, Sr.	

Please notify the office if you want to add or remove a person from this list.

1 Lord Je - sus, think on me, and purge a - way my sin;
 2 Lord Je - sus, think on me, by anx - ious thoughts op - pressed;
 3 Lord Je - sus, think on me, nor let me go a - stray;
 4 Lord Je - sus, think on me, that, when the flood is past,

from self - ish pas - sions set me free and make me pure with - in.
 let me your lov - ing ser - vant be and taste your prom - ised rest.
 through dark - ness and per - plex - i - ty point out your cho - sen way.
 I may the e - ter - nal bright - ness see and share your joy at last.

Text: Synesius of Cyrene, 375–430; tr. Allen W. Chatfield, 1808–1896, alt.
 Music: W. Daman, *The Psalmes of David*, 1579, alt.

SOUTHWELL
 SM

1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
 3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for

you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
 you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
 you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain

watch - ing for you and for me.
 mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!
 par - don for you and for me. Come home, come home!"

You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,

Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"