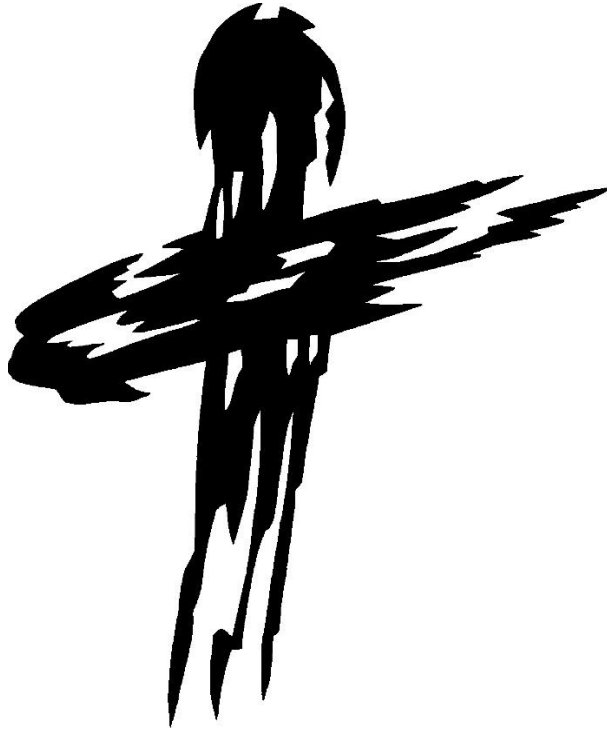


Order of Worship
Ash Wednesday
February 18, 2026



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Ash Wednesday. On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

*=ALL STAND for this part of worship

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*GATHERING HYMN

Return to God
(Verses on next page)

Marty Haugen

Refrain

Re - turn to God with all your heart, the source of grace and

mer - cy; come seek the ten - der faith - ful - ness of

1. God. 2. God. Last time

Verses 1, 2

1. Now the time of grace has come, the

2. I will take your heart of stone and

day of sal - va - tion; come and learn now the

place a heart with - in you, a heart of com -

D.C.

way of our God.

D.C.

pas - sion and love.

Verse 3*

3. If you break the chains of op - pres - sion, if you
if you share your bread with the hun - gry, give pro -
give a shel - ter to the home - less, clothe the

1., 2. 3.

set the pris - 'ner free;
tec - tion to the lost;
na - ked in your midst, then your light shall break

D.C.

forth like the dawn.

***APOSTOLIC GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray together:

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.

FIRST READING:

Isaiah 58:1-12

¹ Shout out; do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments;
they want God on their side.

³ “Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day
and oppress all your workers.

⁴ You fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you;
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you continually
and satisfy your needs in parched places
and make your bones strong,
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

PSALM 51 *(We will read the Psalm responsively.)*

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

² **Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

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

⁴ **Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

⁵ Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my mother's womb.

⁶ **Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

⁷ Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

⁸ **Let me hear joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

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

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

¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² **Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

¹³ Let me teach your ways to offenders,
and sinners shall be restored to you.

¹⁴ **Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

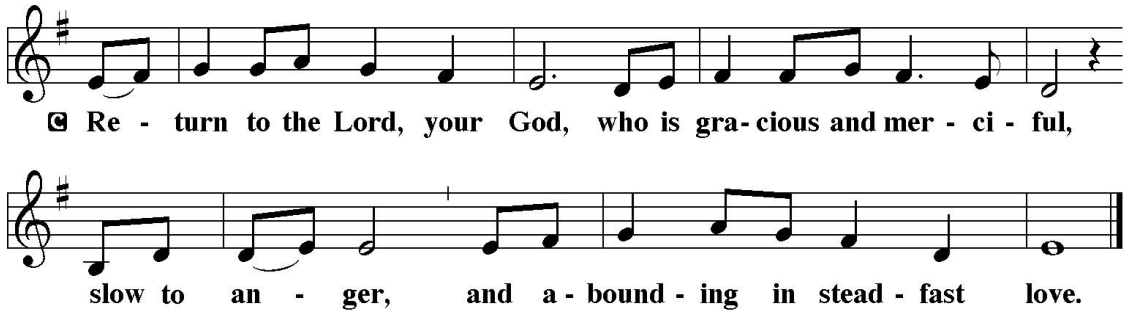
¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

¹⁶ **For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.
You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

¹⁷ The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

We stand for the reading of the Gospel.



***GOSPEL:**

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

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

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ “Beware of practicing your righteousness 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 somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so 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, ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Silence is kept for reflection.

***CONFESSION OF SIN**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism,
as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.
Amen.

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt
and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.
For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:
Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.
For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:
Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.
For failing to recognize your coming reign,
and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.
For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,
and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For disregarding voices from the margin,
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world:
Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,
and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life:
Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.
Through faith, the free gift of God,
you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.
In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.
The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead
dwells in you,
pours God's love into your hearts,
and gives you life and peace. **Amen.**

INSTITUTION OF ASHES

*Those who desire to receive ashes come forward and kneel before the altar.
The ministers apply ashes to the forehead of each person with the words:
Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

*After all who desire ashes have received them, the minister leads the congregation
in the conclusion of the confession.*

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
that we may show forth your glory in the world.
By the cross and Passion of your Son, our Lord,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

Silence for reflection.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

Guide your church, O God. Accompany all Christians in this season of repentance, and renew our faith in the riches of grace you give to us in baptism. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heal this earth, O God. Satisfy the needs of every parched place, every diverse ecosystem, every suffering creature. Though all return to dust, grant beauty and purpose to each living thing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Restore the nations, O God. Let your healing spring up quickly across the world. Give all in authority the will to loose the bonds of injustice and let any who are oppressed go free. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Deliver your people, O God. Comfort any whose hearts are rent by grief, uphold any who are sick, bring food to those who hunger, and give housing to all without shelter. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Bless this assembly, O God. Reconcile us to one another and to you. Strengthen our resolve to fast from evil, open our hands in sharing, and quicken our prayer. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Hold us forever, O God. We thank you for all who now know their treasure in heaven, and for Martin Luther and all who on earth proclaimed your abounding, steadfast love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.
Amen.

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

The Glory of These Forty Days

ELW 320

1 The glo - ry of these for - ty days we cel - e -
2 A - lone and fast - ing Mo - ses saw the lov - ing
3 So Dan - iel trained his mys - tic sight, de - liv - ered
4 Then grant, O God, that we may, too, re - turn in
brate with songs of praise; for Christ, through whom all
God who gave the law; and to E - li - jah,
from the li - ons' might; and John, the Bride - groom's
fast and prayer to you. Our spir - its strength-en
things were made, him - self has fast - ed and has prayed.
fast - ing, came the steeds and char - i - ots of flame.
friend, be - came the her - ald of Mes - si - ah's name.
with your grace, and give us joy to see your face.

*BENEDICTION

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:
God, who calls all things into existence,
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,
and the Holy Spirit,
whose breath sustains creation,
✠ bless you now and always.
Amen.

*DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Be of good courage.
Thanks be to God.

PERMISSIONS

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The Glory of These Forty Days, Text: Latin hymn, 11th cent.; tr. Maurice F. Bell, 1862-1947, alt. Music: J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543. Public domain.

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