

February 18, 2026 – 12 Noon & 7:00 p.m.
Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes



A S H
Wednesday

Ash Wednesday (*see end page of the bulletin for more background and the Lenten worship schedule*) marks the beginning of the 40-day Lenten season with a cross of ashes on our foreheads. This cross is an echo of our baptismal anointing, when we were buried with Christ. The ash is also a reminder of our mortality; however, because our death is now in Christ, our endings are beginnings.

Lenten devotional booklets are available in the Narthex for use at home or online, see the back of the bulletin for QR Code to read online.

If you would like more information about St. John's and our ministry, please speak with one of the greeters, ushers, or the pastor.

*Please use the time before worship for quiet prayer and meditation.
Silence or turn off all mobile devices so that the time of worship is not
disturbed.*

Entrance of Worship Leaders

- P** Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- C** **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!**
- P** For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me
- C** **Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.**
- P** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- C** **Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**
- P** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- C** **Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.**
- P** Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- C** **Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**
- P** Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- C** **Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.**
- P** Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

Exhortation

P Brothers and sisters in Christ: God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of his creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn to him and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love – the discipline of Lent – help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Confession

P Most holy and merciful Father:

C we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

P We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other

people, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

C Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great. Amen.

Liturgy of Ashes

P Come to God who creates life out of dust and ashes. Come to God who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified, died and buried. Come to God who promises forgiveness of sins, life and salvation to all who trust in him. Come to God who calls us by name and knows our every need, that he might shape and form us and breathe into us his life-giving Spirit.

C We come to you, O God, though we are but dust and ashes. We come to you for forgiveness, strength and new life. Breathe into us your life-giving Spirit that we might live in your joy and peace. Amen.

P I invite you now to come forward and be marked with a cross of ashes. Let this be for us a sign of our repentance, our own mortality, and our hope in Christ who by his death and resurrection has given to us the hope of everlasting life.

Imposition of the Ashes

Worshipers are invited to come forward at the direction of the ushers to receive ashes.

During the imposition of ashes, you are invited to meditate on Psalm 90.

Music during the imposition of ashes: "Interlude" (Andre Isoir)

When all have received the ashes, the liturgy concludes as follows: (please stand)

P Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

C **that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

P By the cross and Passion of your Son, our Lord,

C **bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

P Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore we implore him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

Prayer for Ash Wednesday

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray:

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

Joel 2:12-19

¹²"Yet even now," declares the LORD,
"return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³and rend your hearts and not your garments."

Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;
and he relents over disaster.

¹⁴Who 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?

¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion;
consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶gather the people.

Consecrate the congregation;
assemble the elders;
gather the children,
even nursing infants.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her chamber.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep
and say, "Spare your people, O LORD,
and make not your heritage a reproach,
a byword among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"

¹⁸Then the LORD became jealous for his land
and had pity on his people.

¹⁹The LORD answered and said to his people,

“Behold, I am sending to you
grain, wine, and oil,
and you will be satisfied;
and I will no more make you
a reproach among the nations.”

☒ This is the Word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For 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}Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

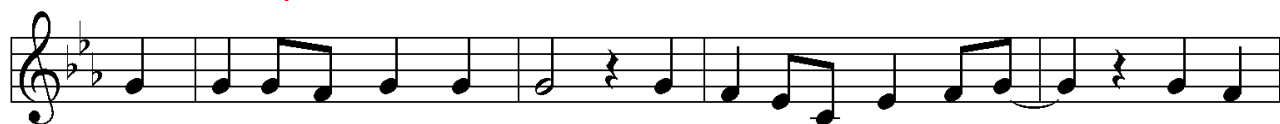
“In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

☒ This is the Word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

Lenten Verse *(please stand)*



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, re - turn to the Lord, your God, who is



gra-cious and mer-ci-ful, slow to an-ger, and a-bound-ing in stead-fast love.

Holy Gospel

St. Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

¹[Jesus said:] "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

²"Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when 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 when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

P The Gospel of the Lord.


C Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon


"From Ashes to Alleluia"

Hymn for Ash Wednesday "Again We Keep This Solemn Fast" (GIA 158)


unison



1. A - gain we keep this sol - emn fast A
 2. The law and proph - ets from of old In
 3. More spar - ing, there - fore, let us make The
 4. Let us a - void each harm - ful way That
 5. We pray, O bless - ed Three in One, Our



gift of faith from a - ges past, This Lent which binds us
 fig - ured ways this Lent fore - told, Which Christ, all a - ges'
 words we speak, the food we take, Our sleep, our laugh - ter,
 lures the care - less mind a - stray; By watch - ful prayer our
 God while end - less a - ges run, That this, our Lent of



lov - ing - ly To faith and hope and char - i - ty.
 Lord and Guide, In these last days has sanc - ti - fied.
 ev - 'ry sense; Learn peace through ho - ly pen - i - tence.
 spir - its free From schem - ing of the En - e - my.
 for - ty days, May bring us growth and give you praise.

Text: *Ex more docti mystico*; ascr. to Gregory the Great, c.540-604; tr. by Peter J. Scagnelli, b.1949, ©
 Tune: ERHALT UNS HERR, LM; Klug's *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543; harm. by J.S. Bach, 1685-1750

Prayers of Intercession

- P** Returning to the Lord with all our heart, let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

*Special prayer requests are announced followed by a brief silence. During the season of Lent each petition ends with the phrase: "Hear us, O God."
Please respond by saying: "Your mercy is great."*

The prayers end with the words:

- P** Hear us according to your steadfast love, O God, and in your great compassion bring us to resurrection and rebirth in Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

Offertory Prayer

- L** Let us pray:
God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

- P** The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

- P** Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

- P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Preface

P It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. You bid your people cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast. Renew our zeal in faith and life, and bring us to the fullness of the grace that belongs to the children of God. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9



Ho-ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er, God of might:
heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the high-est.
Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na
in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Eucharistic Prayer

Lord's Prayer

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

G **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; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Agnus Dei

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
have mer - cy on us, have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
have mer - cy on us, have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace.

Distribution

Lutheran Christians believe and teach that in the Sacrament of the Altar, Christ's body and blood are given to those who receive the bread and wine. With the bread and wine, the gifts of His body and blood are given to Christ's people for forgiveness of sins, strength for our journey of faith, and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. All who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, and who trust His words that these gifts are given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, are invited to receive the Eucharist.

Please follow the direction of the ushers to come to the Lord's Table. The bread will be distributed first. **Gluten-free wafers** are available for those who may need these. Please indicate this to the pastor at the distribution. The wine is then received by individual glasses only. Non-alcoholic grape juice is available for those who for medical or recovery purposes must abstain from alcohol.

Children who do not receive the Sacrament are invited to come forward and receive a blessing. Please cross arms over chest so the pastor and lay assistant are able to distinguish children who do commune from those who do not yet receive the Sacrament.

For additional self-preparation to receive the Sacrament, please see "Christian Questions with Their Answers" beginning on page 1351 in the pew Bible.

Distribution Music

7:00 pm choral anthem

"To Dust" (Karen Marrolli)

*Let my crying come to dust.
let my grief be turned to ashes.
Let my heart be cleansed in flame.
Kyrie eleison.*

*Let my mourning turn to song.
Let my sorrow turn to sunrise
Let my broken spirit rest
Kyrie eleison.*

*Let your healing waters rise.
Let your deserts bloom with bounty.
Let you Holy Spirit come.
Christe eleison.*

*Let our crying come to dust.
Let our grief be turned to ashes.
Let our hearts be cleansed with flame.
Kyrie eleison.*

"To Thee, Omniscient Lord of All"

(LSB 613)



1 To Thee, om - ni - scient Lord of all, In grief and shame I
2 O Lord, my God, to Thee I pray: O cast me not in
3 O Je - sus, let Thy pre - cious blood Be to my soul a



hum - bly call; I see my sins a - gainst Thee, Lord,
wrath a - way! Let Thy good Spir - it ne'er de - part,
cleans - ing flood. Turn not, O Lord, Thy guest a - way,



The sins of thought and deed and word. They press me
But let Him draw to Thee my heart That tru - ly
But grant that jus - ti - fied I may Go to my



sore; I cry to Thee: O God, be mer - ci - ful to me!
pen - i - tent I be: O God, be mer - ci - ful to me!
house at peace with Thee: O God, be mer - ci - ful to me!

Text: Magnus Brostrup Landstad, 1802-80; tr. Carl Döving, 1867-1937, alt.
Tune: attr. Martin Luther, 1483-1546
Text and tune: Public domain

"Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord"

(LSB 637)



1 Draw near and take the bod - y of the Lord,
2 He who His saints in this world rules and shields,
3 Come for - ward then with faith - ful hearts sin - cere,



And drink the ho - ly blood for you out - poured;
To all be - liev - ers life e - ter - nal yields;
And take the pledg - es of sal - va - tion here.



Of - fered was He for great - est and for least,
With heav'n - ly bread He makes the hun - gry whole,
O Lord, our hearts with grate - ful thanks en - dow



Him - self the vic - tim and Him - self the priest.
Gives liv - ing wa - ters to the thirst - ing soul.
As in this feast of love You bless us now.

Text: Latin, 7th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.
Tune: Trente quatre Pseaumes de David, 1551, Geneva, ed. Louis Bourgeois
Text and tune: Public domain

Dismissal

Prayer of Thanksgiving

L Let us pray:

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days.

Renew in us 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.

G Amen.

Blessing

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

Sending

L Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage;

hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil;

strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;

help the afflicted; honor all people;

love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

C Thanks be to God.

Tolling of the Bells

The worship leaders leave in silence. Please exit quietly.



Our Ministry Of Worship

	<u>Noon</u>	<u>7:00 p.m.</u>
Officiant/Preacher	Pastor Meehan	Pastor Meehan
Lay Assistant	Barbara Pate	Tish Nordvall
Communion Lay Assistant	Jennifer Hills	Jennifer Hills
Director of Music	David Leahey	David Leahey
Acolyte	N/A	Caleb Rempe
Ushers	St. John's Team	St. John's Team
Altar Care	Barbara Pate	Cathy Long
AV Operators	N/A	St. John's Team
Welcome	N/A	Jeffery Crocker

✠ ✠ ✠

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Acknowledgments

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Lent 2026 Worship Schedule

Please join us for these special Lenten worship services:

Sunday and Midweek services will be livestreamed (www.sjlc.com/live)

Lenten Sunday Worship Services

These services will be held on Sunday mornings at 10:30AM and will include Holy Communion each week.

Lenten Midweek Worship Services

These services will be held on Wednesdays at 12 Noon with homily and Holy Communion on the following dates: February 25, March 4, 11, 18, 25, and April 1.

Lenten Devotional Materials

Materials may be found in the Narthex at church (hard copy), as well as online. Scan the below QR Code to access the devotions that are available through Lutheran Hour Ministries and entitled, "Behold Your King!"



What is Ash Wednesday?

Originally this day was for the expulsion of penitents from the church, the beginning of a time of temporary excommunication. As early as the third century, Tertullian mentions ashes as a sign of public penitence. In the ninth century, the application of ashes was added to the rite of expulsion of penitents from the church during Lent. The day became known as Ash Wednesday. By the eleventh century, the discipline of public penitence had about disappeared, and Lent was accepted by the entire church as a time to receive ashes and undergo penitence.

Ashes for an Ash Wednesday service are often prepared by burning palm or olive branches from the previous Palm Sunday. The ashes are ground into a powder by working them through a wire mesh sieve with a spoon and maybe mixing the ashes with a little oil or water. The mixture is placed in a small, shallow bowl from which the ashes are applied. After the application of the ashes, the minister's hands are cleansed with a damp towel or napkin.

Ashes are an extraordinarily rich symbol rooted in ancient customs and practices. Ashes, in a Jewish and Christian context, suggest judgment and God's condemnation of sin; frailty, our total dependence upon God for life; humiliation; and repentance. We are reminded forcefully of the words of the committal in the burial service, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust" for one day those words will be said over us.

Moreover, ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. They were once used as a cleansing agent in the absence of soap, and on Ash Wednesday the ashes have sometimes been understood as a penitential substitute for water as a sign of Baptism. (And Baptism is a primary emphasis of Lent.) Water both stifles and refreshes, drowns and makes alive, so the ashes also tell of both death and renewal. A further example of death and renewal shown by ashes is the ancient custom of burning the fields in the spring to destroy the old and to prepare for the new.

During the Lenten season, the altar is completely draped with a large cloth that covers the front, back and sides of the altar. The history of this covering's use is centuries old. Christian churches have traditionally covered or draped altars, crosses and statuary during Lent to indicate the somberness of the season, and to temporarily cover the beauty of their sanctuaries. The beauty of our sanctuary's altar is cloaked during Lent and will be unveiled again at the Easter Vigil. The large, suspended cross and the processional cross are also veiled during this Lenten season to remind us that this is a time when our worship is more restrained and subdued.