



**Evangelical
Lutheran
Church
of
St. Matthew**

*A friendly
household of faith*

Chartered Dec 6, 1664

**361 years of
Gospel Ministry**

**A congregation of
The Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod.**

**The Rev. Peter A.D. Deebrah
Pastor**



On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with the tracing of the life-giving cross that was 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.



**Dear Lord, As we enter
this Solemn and Holy
Season, we pray that
you would send your
Holy Spirit upon us that
we might prepare ourselves
for these coming 40 days of Lent.**

**Even though we may no longer wear sackcloth
and ashes, we do seek to humble ourselves so
that we can understand the magnificence of Your
Love for us as You humbled Yourself and gave Your
Life on the Cross that we might receive the gift of
Eternal Glory with You. AMEN.**

**Ash Wednesday Liturgy
February 18, 2026
1:30 pm**

HYMN: Just As I Am, without One Plea

- 1 Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 2 Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 3 Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 4 Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 5 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come,
- 6 Just as I am; thy love unknown
has broken ev'ry barrier down;
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789-1871

All may make the sign of the cross ✠ in remembrance of their baptism, as the minister begins.

P In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C Amen.**

P The Lord be with you. **C And also with you.**

P Dear brothers and sisters of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on his Word and draws from it life and hope.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of his beloved Son and in the power of his Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

Silence for reflection.

P O Lord, **C have mercy.**

P O Christ, **C have mercy.**

P O Lord, **C have mercy.**

P O Christ, **C hear us.**

P God the Father in heaven, **C have mercy.**

P God the Son, Redeemer of the world, **C have mercy.**

P God the Holy Spirit, **C have mercy.**

P Be gracious to us. **C Spare us, good Lord.**

P Be gracious to us. **C Help us, good Lord.**

P By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity; by Your baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and passion; by Your precious death and burial; by Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter: **C Help us, good Lord.**

P In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the day of judgment: **C Help us, good Lord.**

P We poor sinners implore You **C to hear us, O Lord.**

P To prosper the teaching of Your Word; to bless our prayer and meditation; to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith; and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P To draw all to Yourself; to bless those who are instructed in the faith; to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the lonely, the forsaken, the abandoned, and all who stand in need of our prayer; to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy; and to have mercy on us all:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P To turn our hearts to You; to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers; and graciously to hear our prayers:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, **C** **we implore You to hear us.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, **C** **have mercy.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, **C** **have mercy.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **grant us Your peace.**

P O Christ, **C** **hear us.**

P O Lord, **C** **have mercy.**

P O Christ, **C** **have mercy.**

P O Lord, **C** **have mercy. Amen.**

P O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C** **Amen.**

Hymn: Today Your Mercy Calls Us

- 1 Today Your mercy calls us To wash away our sin.
However great our trespass, Whatever we have been,
However long from mercy Our hearts have turned away,
Your precious blood can wash us And make us clean today.
- 2 Today Your gate is open, And all who enter in
Shall find a Father's welcome And pardon for their sin.
The past shall be forgotten, A present joy be giv'n,
A future grace be promised, A glorious crown in heav'n.
- 3 Today our Father calls us; His Holy Spirit waits;
His blessed angels gather Around the heav'nly gates.
No question will be asked us How often we have come;
Although we oft have wandered, It is our Father's home.
- 4 O all-embracing Mercy, O ever-open Door,
What should we do without You When heart and eye run o'er?
When all things seem against us, To drive us to despair,
We know one gate is open, One ear will hear our prayer. Public domain

Imposition of Ashes

(Acknowledgement of our mortality and a call to repentance)

Sign of the cross is traced on the forehead with the words:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The following is then said:

- 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 Savior,
- C** bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.
- P** Let us pray...Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made and you forgave the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may obtain from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. **C** Amen.



Hymn: 779 Come, My Soul, with Every Care

- 1 Come, my soul, with ev'ry care,
Jesus loves to answer prayer;
He Himself has bid thee pray,
Therefore will not turn away.
- 2 Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and pow'r are such
None can ever ask too much.
- 3 With my burden I begin:
Lord, remove this load of sin;
Let Thy blood, for sinners spilt,
Set my conscience free from guilt.
- 4 Lord, Thy rest to me impart,
Take possession of my heart;
There Thy blood-bought right maintain
And without a rival reign.
- 5 While I am a pilgrim here,
Let Thy love my spirit cheer;
As my guide, my guard, my friend,
Lead me to my journey's end.
- 6 Show me what is mine to do;
Ev'ry hour my strength renew.
Let me live a life of faith;
Let me die Thy people's death.

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt. Text: Public domain

THE READINGS - Speak, Lord, for your servant listens. (1 Samuel 3:10b)

A reading from the prophet Joel

Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,

for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near,

²a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!

Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains

a great and powerful people; their like has never been before,

nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.

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.

Joel 2:12-19

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 51:1-13 (*congregation speaks text in bold print*)

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!**

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

**⁴Against 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.**

⁵Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

**⁶Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**

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

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

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

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

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

**¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.**

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

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

A reading from 2nd Corinthians

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. 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.

¹Working 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. *2 Corinthians 5:20–6:10*

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

C **Return to the Lord, your God,
for He is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and abounding in steadfast love.**

P **THE HOLY GOSPEL** according to St. Matthew, the 6th chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[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[Jesus said:] “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. *Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21*

P This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ

Homily

Hymn: What Can Wash Away My Sin?

- 1 What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain: Oh, precious is the flow
that makes me bright as snow;
no other fount I know;
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

- 2 For my pardon this I see:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
For my cleansing this my plea:
nothing but the blood of Jesus. *Refrain*

- 3 Nothing can for sin atone:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
Naught of good that I have done:
nothing but the blood of Jesus. *Refrain*

- 4 This is all my hope and peace:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
This is all my righteousness:
nothing but the blood of Jesus. *Refrain*

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826-1899

AFIRMATION OF FAITH - THE APOSTLES' CREED.

P God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ Jesus.
Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

C **I believe in God,**

the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ,

**His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by 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 rose again from the dead.

**He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand
of God the Father Almighty.**

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

**the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life † everlasting. Amen.**

The LORD'S PRAYER:

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray...

C **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.**

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**

Sit

Announcements

Hymn: I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

- 1 I want Jesus to walk with me;
I want Jesus to walk with me;
all along my pilgrim journey,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

- 2 In my trials, Lord, walk with me;
in my trials, Lord, walk with me;
when my heart is almost breaking,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

- 3 When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me;
when I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me;
when my head is bowed in sorrow,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Text: African American spiritual

After a moment of silence for reflection the congregation shall be dismissed as follows:

- P** 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.

- G** Thanks be to God.

You may leave an Offering as you depart