

# The Ash Wednesday Liturgy

## February 18, 2026



## *Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church*

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***Our Mission:*** Empowered and inspired by God to bring others to Christ.

***\*If you need assistance locating something, please see one of the ushers in the back of the church***

*Given the solemn nature of the service, things will be more reflective with an emphasis upon silence with certain parts of the normal worship liturgy omitted including the creed, and with less music being done primarily to accompany congregational singing.*

*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.*

*To provide time for silent meditation, there is no processional hymn. When the pastor and worship assistants enter and go to their places, the congregation will please stand.*

## The Rite of Preparation

### \*Psalm 51

HAVE MERCY ON ME, O GOD, ACCORDING TO YOUR STEADFAST LOVE; ACCORDING TO YOUR ABUNDANT MERCY BLOT OUT MY TRANSGRESSIONS.

**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin, for I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.**

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.

**Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

PURGE ME WITH HYSSOP, AND I SHALL BE CLEAN; WASH ME, AND I SHALL BE WHITER THAN SNOW.

**Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.**

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD, AND PUT A NEW AND RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME. DO NOT CAST ME AWAY FROM YOUR PRESENCE, AND DO NOT TAKE YOUR HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME.

**Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.**

O LORD, OPEN MY LIPS, AND MY MOUTH WILL DECLARE YOUR PRAISE. FOR YOU HAVE NO DELIGHT IN SACRIFICE; IF I WERE TO GIVE A BURNT OFFERING, YOU WOULD NOT BE PLEASED. THE SACRIFICE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD IS A BROKEN SPIRIT; A BROKEN AND CONTRITE HEART, O GOD, YOU WILL NOT DESPISE.

**Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.**

### The Exhortation

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: 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 THE 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.

### \* The Confession and Forgiveness

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.

*Please kneel if able.*

GRACIOUS GOD,

**For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: 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.**

*(Please be seated)*

## Imposition of Ashes

(Those who desire to receive ashes come forward as you do for intinction, in silence. When all who desire receive ashes return to their pews, the congregation will kneel.)

*"Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return"*

*(Please Kneel)*

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, 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.

**Amen.**

### **\*The Prayer of the Day**

THE LORD BE WITH YOU

*(Spoken)* **And also with you.**

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.**

**The Anthem**

*"He Was crucified"* – Young

*Senior Choir*

# The Liturgy of the Word

## The First Lesson Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

*Because of the coming Day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.*

### A Reading from Joel:

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 — 2a 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. <sup>12</sup>Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>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? <sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>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?""

### *After the Reading*

THE WORD OF THE LORD

**Thanks be to God**

## The Second Lesson 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

*The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.*

### A Reading from Corinthians

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 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! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as imposters, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see -- we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

### *After the Reading*

THE WORD OF THE LORD

**Thanks be to God**

**\* The Gospel Acclamation** (*Lenten Verse Now the Feast*)

**Return to God with all your heart, the Source of grace and mercy;  
Come, seek the tender faithfulness of God.**

**\*The Holy Gospel & Responses** St. Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.*

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

(Spoken) **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.

"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.

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

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.

"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.

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 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.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD

(Spoken) **Praise to you, O Christ**

**The Sermon**

*Pastor Cindy White*

**\*The Hymn of the Day**      *"Chief of Sinners Though I Be"*

No. 306

**\*The 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.**

HOLD US FOREVER, O GOD. WE THANK YOU FOR ALL WHO NOW KNOW THEIR TREASURE IN HEAVEN, AND FOR 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 Offering & Organ Offertory**

*Zion members, please use your envelopes for contributions so that your offering may be officially recorded.*

**\* The Offertory Procession “As the Grains of Wheat” (Now the Feast)**

*(Refrain)* **As the grains of wheat once scattered on the hill**

**were gathered into one to become our bread;**

**so may all your people from all the**

**ends of earth be gathered into one in you.**

**As this cup of blessing is shared within our midst,**

**may we share the presence of your love. (Refrain)**

**\* The Offertory Prayer**

LET US PRAY: O GOD, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, YOUR STEADFAST LOVE EMBRACES ALL CREATION. YOU SEND RAIN AND SUNSHINE TO NOURISH THE EARTH AND BRING FORTH ITS BOUNTY. THROUGH THESE GIFTS OF BREAD AND WINE, DRAW US INTO THE DEATH AND LIFE OF YOUR SON, WHO CALLS US TO BEAR WITNESS TO HIS SAVING WORK. WE ASK THIS IN JESUS’ NAME.

**Amen.**

**The Liturgy of the Meal**

**\* The Great Thanksgiving**

**\* The Preface and Sanctus**

THE LORD BE WITH YOU

*(Sung)* **And also with you.**

LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

LET US GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD OUR GOD.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

IT IS OUR DUTY.....THEIR UNENDING HYMN: *(Now the Feast)*

*(Sung)* **Holy, holy, holy are you, God of power and might; Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes in your name. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!**

**\*The Eucharistic Prayer** *(Now the Feast)*

YOU ARE INDEED HOLY, ... WE PRAY FOR HIS COMING AGAIN EVEN AS WE CRY.

AMEN. COME, LORD JESUS. AMEN. COME, LORD JESUS.

*(Sung)* **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

SEND NOW, WE PRAY, YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, THAT ALL OF YOUR PROMISES MAY COME TO US AND YOUR CREATION.

AMEN. COME, HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN. COME, HOLY SPIRIT.

*(Sung)* **Amen. Come, Holy Spirit. Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.**

THIS WE PRAY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, OUR SAVIOR AND OUR FRIEND.

*(Sung)* **Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Spirit,  
all glory and honor is yours, O God, now and forever. Amen.**

**\*The Lord's Prayer**

MAKE US BOLD, O MERCIFUL GOD, TO ADDRESS YOU AS OUR ABBA AS WE PRAY:

**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**

**\* The Invitation to the Holy Meal**

COME TO THE TABLE. FEAST ON GOD'S GOODNESS AND MERCY.

**\* The Agnus Dei "Lamb of God" *(Now the Feast)***

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:**

**have mercy on us, mercy on us, mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:**

**have mercy on us, mercy on us, mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;**

**grant us peace, grant us peace, grant us peace.**

**The Distribution**

*All who are baptized and believe that Christ is truly present in the Sacrament are welcome to commune when we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Zion members, please complete a Communion card once a year for our records.*

**\* The Post-Communion Blessing**

MAY THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THE GIFTS OF HIS BODY AND BLOOD STRENGTHEN, KEEP AND UNITE, NOW AND FOREVER.

**Amen.**

**\* The Post Communion Canticle *(music on page 72 of LBW)***

**Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word; For mine eyes have  
seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the  
Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the  
Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen**

**\* The Post Communion Prayer**

LET US PRAY, GOD OF OUR SALVATION, WE GIVE YOU THANKS FOR THIS MEAL THAT RESTORES OUR SOULS, RECONCILES US TO YOU, AND STRENGTHENS US FOR THE JOURNEY. THROUGH THE BODY AND BLOOD OF YOUR SON, MAY WE BECOME CHRIST'S BODY IN THE WORLD, BEARING WITNESS TO YOUR LOVE FOR ALL CREATION, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, OUR SAVIOR AND LORD.

**Amen.**

**\* The Blessing**

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.

**(Spoken) Amen.**

**\* The Dismissal**

GO IN PEACE. BELIEVE THE GOOD NEWS.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*The Recessional Hymn**

***“The Glory of These Forty Days”***

WOV No. 657

**The glory of these forty days we celebrate with songs of praise;  
For Christ, through whom all things were made, himself has fasted and has prayed.**

**Alone and fasting Moses saw the loving God who gave the law;  
And to Elijah, fasting, came the steeds and chariots of flame.**

**So Daniel trained his mystic sight, delivered from the lion's might;  
And John, the Bridegroom's friend, became the herald of Messiah's name.**

**Then grant, O God, that we may, too, return in fast and prayer to you.  
Our spirits strengthen with your grace, and give us joy to see your face.**

**Depart in Silence**

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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**Pastor** Rev. Cindy White  
**Musician** Sandra Mehalko  
**LCA** Deb Davies  
**Cantor** Kathy Miller  
**Lector** Deb Davies