

WELCOME TO ZION'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Ash Wednesday                                      March 5, 2025

*\*(Congregation please stand as able)*

**Introduction**

*Ash Wednesday is a solemn day of prayer that begins the season of Lent. On this day we confess our sin in a litany of repentance, and hear scriptural descriptions of the stark difference between our lives and God's intention for our lives. Today, and throughout the season of Lent, we also hear the Good News of God's forgiveness, and the joy forgiveness imparts into our broken world. While the imposition of ashes reminds us of our mortality, their cross-shape proclaims Christ's eternal claim on our lives. Because of this, we can journey through Lent with confidence and joy, trusting God's goodness and grace, and the promise of the empty tomb.*

**\*Psalm 51:1-17:**

*We will read responsively, alternating between Piano & organ sides.*

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

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

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

**Organ: 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 judgement.**

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

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

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

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

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

**Organ: Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a right spirit within me.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**\*Greeting and Prayer of the Day:**

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

P: 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.

**C: Amen.**

**The First Reading:** Isaiah 58:1-12 (pg. 600 in pew Bible)

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. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practised righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they delight to draw near to God. ‘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. Look, 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. 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? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? 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? 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 rearguard. 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, 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. 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. 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.

*After the reading:* Leader: The Word of God, the Word of Life. **Congregation: Thanks Be to God.**

**Psalm 103:8-14** (read responsively)

Leader: The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**Congregation: He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger for ever.**

L: He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

**C: For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him;**

L: as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.

**C: As a father has compassion for his children,**

L: so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.

**C: For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust.**

**The Second Reading:** 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 (pg. 940 in pew Bible)

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; 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, labours, 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 honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, 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:* Leader: The Word of God, the Word of Life. **Congregation: Thanks Be to God.**

**\*Gospel Acclamation:**



Re-turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra-cious and mer-ci-ful,  
slow to an-ger, and a-bound-ing in stead-fast love.

**\*The Holy Gospel:** Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (pg. 787 in pew Bible)

*Before the reading:* P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 6th Chapter.

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

‘Beware of practising 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.

*After the reading:* P: The Gospel of our Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

**\*Hymn of the Day:** WOV 733 *Our Father, We Have Wandered*

1 Our Fa - ther, we have wan - dered and hid - den from your face;  
2 And now at length dis - cern - ing the e - vil that we do,  
3 O Lord of all the liv - ing, both ban - ished and re - stored,  
in fool - ish - ness have squan - dered your leg - a - cy of grace.  
be - hold us, Lord, re - turn - ing with hope and trust to you.  
com - pas - sion - ate, for - giv - ing and ev - er - car - ing Lord,  
But now, in ex - ile dwell - ing, we rise with fear and shame,  
In haste you come to meet us and home re - joic - ing bring,  
grant now that our trans - gress - ing, our faith - less - ness may cease.  
as, dis - tant but com - pel - ling, we hear you call our name.  
in glad - ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.  
Stretch out your hand in bless - ing, in par - don, and in peace.

### **\*Invitation to Lent:**

P: 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 of Sin:**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination*

P: Most holy and merciful God:

**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, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

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

P: Let us pray,

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. **C: Amen.**

## Imposition of Ashes:

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

*Those who desire to receive ashes are invited to come forward using the center aisle to form a single line. After receiving the ashes on your forehead with the words, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return", you may return to your seat using the side aisle.*

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: 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. **C: Amen**

## \*Prayers of the People:

(after hearing, "Lord in your mercy," respond: **Hear our Prayer**

(after hearing the final petition: "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" respond: **Amen**

## Choir Anthem

### Offering with Offertory

### Offering Hymn

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your  
pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -  
store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,  
and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Music: J. A. Freylinghausen, 1670-1739

## \*Offertory Prayer

P: Blessed are you,

**C: O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts.**

**With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, being stonecatchers for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### **\*The Great Thanksgiving:**


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

P: Lift up your hearts.     **C: We life them to God.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.     **C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

### **\*Holy, Holy, Holy**



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might: Heav'n 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.

P: Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age. Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one. Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ. Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P: O God of resurrection and new life; Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### **Invitation to the Lord's Prayer**

P: Let us pray using the words Jesus taught us:

Our Fa-ther in heav-en, hal-lowed be your name, your king-dom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heav-en. Give us to-day our dai-ly bread. For-give us our sins as we for-give  
those who sin a- gainst us. Save us from the time of tri-al and de-liv-er us from e-vil.  
For the king-dom, the pow'r, and the glo-ry are yours, now and for-ev-er. A-men

**\*Invitation to the Lord's Table**

P: Taste and see that the Lord is good.

*This is the Lord's table where all are welcome. At the ushers instruction, you are invited to come forward, pick up either a pre-filled grape juice cup, or empty communion cup, and kneel or stand at the communion railing. (gluten free wafers are available for those who need that, please let Pastor know when you are communing) Here, you will first receive the bread, and then either a blessing of your grape juice, or the wine poured into your glass. After consuming both elements, return to your seat by the side aisle, placing your empty glass in the tray.*

**Lamb of God:**

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

**Distribution of Elements**

**Communion Hymns:** #662 *Restore in Us, O God*  
(blue book) #734 *Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling*  
#740 *Jesus Remember Me*

**\*Post Communion Prayer**

P: 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. C: Amen.

**\*Benediction**

P: Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. C: Amen.

**\*Sending Hymn:** ELW 326 *Bless Now, O God, the Journey*

1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,  
 2 Bless so - journ - ers and pil - grims who share this wind - ing way;  
 3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.

the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.  
 your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus - tains the day.  
 We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow,

The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun - tain round,  
 We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;  
 but wait - ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.

then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.  
 to - geth - er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.  
 Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955-1993 Music: Welsh tune, 19th cent. Text © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc. LLANGLOFFAN 76 76 D

### **Dismissal:**

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. **C: Thanks be to God.**

MUSICIAN: Maryann Guldin  
 VIDEOGRAPHER: James Cascarino  
 ACOLYTE: Izaac McQuaide  
 COMM. ASST: Kelly Rittle,  
 Ushers: Mike Long

LECTOR.: Kelly Rittle  
 PRAYER: Elaine Ludwig  
 Elevette OP: Noel Strattan  
 PASTOR: Rev. Caitlin M. Kurtz

*Zion's worship services are live-streamed and archived on YouTube. While the focus is always on the worship leaders and the sanctuary at large, your voice and image may be included as part of the recording. If you do not wish to appear on film, please sit in, or under, the balcony and ask an usher for communion to be brought to your seat. If you have any other questions, please speak with Pastor Caitlin. Thank you for your understanding and support in spreading the Gospel message!*