

*Whenever you pray,
go into your room
and shut the door
and pray to
your Father
who is in
secret ...*

Matthew 6:6, NRSV

ST. DAVID'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 26, 2020

HOLY COMMUNION

1:30 PM & 7 PM

LBW SETTING 1

PASTOR: THE REVEREND FARON H. JOHNSON

AUTHORIZED LAY MINISTER: MR. DAVID FINNEY

MINISTER OF MUSIC: MICHAEL BUSIJA

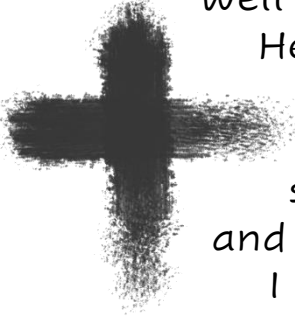
GUEST ORGANIST: JUDY BROTZ

CHURCH: 479-4110; FAX: 479-2994

WWW.STDAVIDSLUTHERAN.ORG

Ash Wednesday 2020

The first time I assisted with the Imposition of Ashes was during my internship year in seminary. The congregation I was serving had an altar rail where people would kneel for ashes. The pastor went one way around the rail and I went the other. It was going pretty well until I came to a mother with a one-year-old little boy.



He was wearing only a diaper and was perfectly content sitting on top of the altar rail. His mother asked me if he also could have ashes. So, I made the ash cross and said to this very young child, "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return."

I hadn't expected how deeply this would touch me. The Imposition of Ashes is a solemn and a holy event. It holds up a mirror to our mortality and reminds us we will meet death one day. We shall all return to the earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

In placing ashes on that child, I was struck by how all-encompassing is our mortality. I had a moment of existential angst realizing that truly none of us will survive this life. Death will come one day for all of us—even this little one. It was a sobering moment.

If Ash Wednesday were only a reminder of our mortality, then it would be a very sad day. Through my experience with this young child I was reminded we don't just smudge ashes on people's foreheads—we make the sign of the cross.

On this first day of Lent we remember it is through the cross Jesus saves us. The cross was death for our Lord—a death he went to willingly because of his great love for us.

In the waters of Baptism, we are claimed by Jesus and the sign of the cross is marked on our forehead to remind us nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. The ash cross we receive today reminds us we belong to the Lord who made heaven and earth and he will never let us go.

May God continue to bless and keep you through this season of Lent.

+Bishop Michael Rhyne
Allegheny Synod

INTRODUCTION

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.

The assembly stands.

CONFESSION

Most holy and merciful Father:

We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

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. **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

We have been deaf 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.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives, **we confess to you, Lord.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, **we confess to you, Lord.**

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves, **we confess to you, Lord.**

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work, **we confess to you, Lord.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us, **we confess to you, Lord.**

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,
accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,
accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,
accept our repentance, Lord.

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.
Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen.

IMPOSITION 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, 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 assembly is seated.

GATHERING HYMN

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found; was blind, but now I see.
grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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 obtain from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The assembly is seated.

FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

The First Reading is from Joel, the 2nd chapter.

{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.}

¹Blow 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.

¹²Yet even now, says the LORD,

 return to me with all your heart,

with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³rend 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.

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;
sanctify a fast;

call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶gather 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.

¹⁷Between 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,

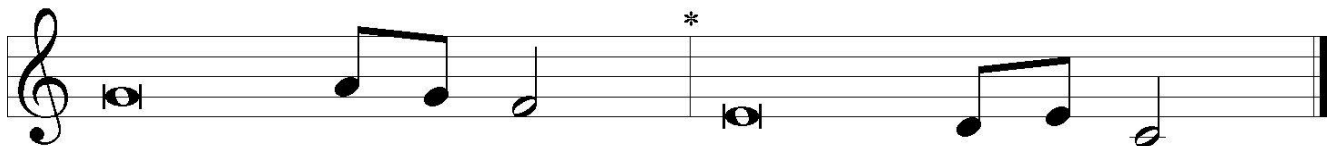
'Where is their God?'"

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: 51:1-17

Psalm Tone 1



Refrain: *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your lovingkindness. (Ps. 51:1)*

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | lovingkindness;*
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.

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

³For I know | my transgressions,*
and my sin is ev- | er before me.

⁴**Against you only | have I sinned***
and done what is evil | in your sight. R

⁵And so you are justified | when you speak*
and upright | in your judgment.

⁶**Indeed, I have been wicked | from my birth,***
a sinner from my | mother's womb.

⁷For behold, you look for truth | deep within me,*
and will make me understand | wisdom secretly.

⁸**Purge me from my sin, and I | shall be pure;***
wash me, and I shall be | clean indeed. R

⁹Make me hear of | joy and gladness,*
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.

¹⁰**Hide your face | from my sins,***
and blot out all | my iniquities.

¹¹Create in me a clean | heart, O God,*
and renew a right spir- | it within me.

¹²**Cast me not away | from your presence,***
and take not your Holy | Spirit from me. R

¹³Give me the joy of your saving | help again*
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.

¹⁴**I shall teach your ways | to the wicked,***
and sinners shall re- | turn to you.

¹⁵Deliver me from | death, O God,*
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of | my salvation.

¹⁶**Open my | lips, O LORD,***
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise. R

¹⁷Had you desired it, I would have | offered sacrifice,*
but you take no delight | in burnt-offerings.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

The Second Reading is from 2nd Corinthians, the 5th & 6th chapters.

{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.}

^{20b}We entreat 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}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For 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! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute.

We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

VERSE



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, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 6th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“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.

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. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so 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. ⁶But 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 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. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so 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; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

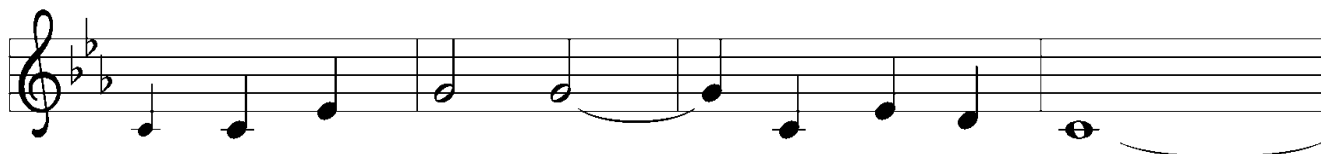
HOMILY

Silence for reflection may follow.

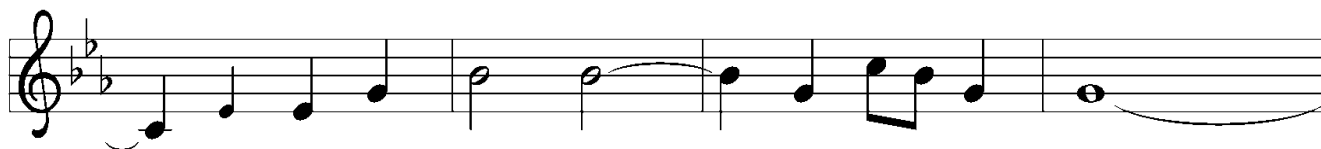
The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY

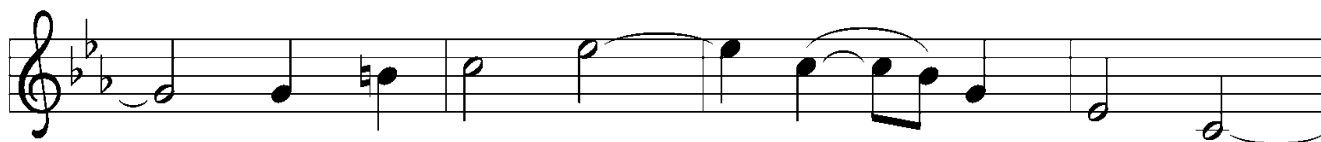
I Want Jesus to Walk with Me



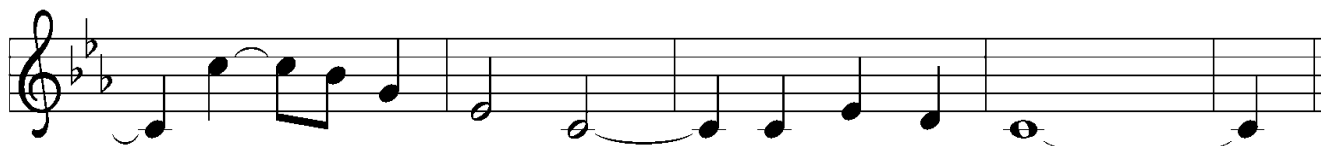
1 I want Je - sus to walk with me;
2 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
3 When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;



I want Je - sus to walk with me;
in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;



all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,
when my heart is al - most break - ing,
when my head is bowed in sor - row,



Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: SOJOURNER, African American spiritual

Together we confess our faith:

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Merciful God, refresh the hearts of your faithful people across all lands and generations. Rescue your church from affliction, hardship, or persecution. Remove all obstacles standing in the way of our witness to your grace, mercy, and everlasting love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Renewing God, bless all wilderness places and all inhabitants of the land. Protect untouched ecosystems, satisfy parched places, and strengthen roots and seeds beneath the soil that await their time to flourish. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Restoring God, rebuild and repair nations ravaged by war or famine (*especially*). Humble the hearts of governments and authorities, that they loose the bonds of injustice and liberate the oppressed. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Generous God, provide bread for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, and protection for the vulnerable. Listen to the cries of all who are abused, imprisoned, and who suffer due to pain, anxiety, or illness (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Faithful God, renew our practices of devotion and discipleship. Make us generous in giving, steadfast in prayer, and attentive to your grace amid many distractions. Be with those who prepare for baptism and affirmation of baptism (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Redeeming God, you raise us from the dust of death and mark us with the cross of salvation. Strengthen us by the faithfulness of the saints. Restore our joy and lead us by your bountiful grace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

The ministers and congregation may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Peace be with you.

Peace be with you.

The assembly is seated.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

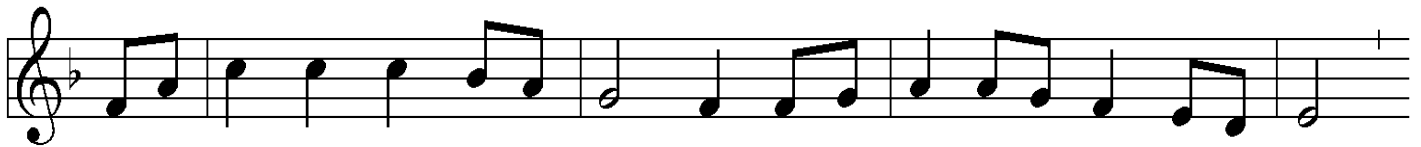
The assembly stands.



☩ What shall I ren-der to the Lord for all his ben-e-fits to me? I will



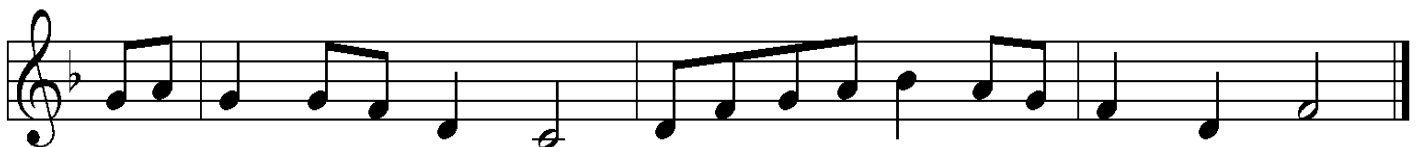
of-fer the sac-ri-fice of thanks-giv-ing and will call on the name of the Lord.



I will take the cup of sal-va-tion and will call on the name of the Lord.



I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the pres-ence of all his peo-ple,



in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Je-ru-sa-lem.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray.

Merciful Father,

we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

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 him thanks and praise.

PREFACE

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 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:

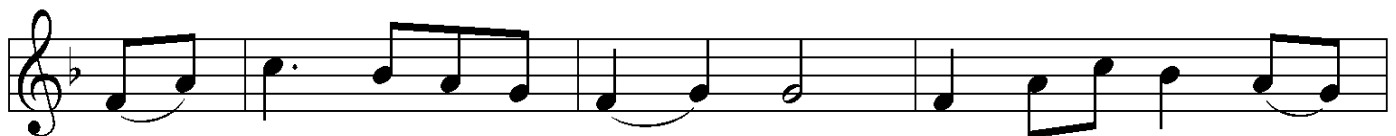
SANCTUS



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



Heav-en and earth are full of your glo- ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.



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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

You are indeed holy, O God, the fountain of all holiness;
you bring light from darkness, life from death, speech from silence.
We worship you for our lives and for the world you give us.
We thank you for the new world to come
and for the love that will rule all in all.

We praise you for the grace shown to Israel, your chosen,
the people of your promise:
the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land,
the memory of the fathers, the homecoming from exile,
and the prophets' words that will not be in vain.
In all this we bless you for your only-begotten Son,
who fulfilled and will fulfill all your promises.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup
we remember the incarnation of your Son:
his human birth and the covenant he made with us.
We remember the sacrifice of his life:
his eating with outcasts and sinners, and his acceptance of death.
But chiefly [on this day] we remember his rising from the tomb,
his ascension to the seat of power,
and his sending of the holy and life-giving Spirit.

We cry out for the resurrection of our lives,
when Christ will come again in beauty and power
to share with us the great and promised feast.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit,
that we and all who share in this bread and cup
may be united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
may enter the fullness of the kingdom of heaven,
and may receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place,
and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest
until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

**Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor
and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to 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.

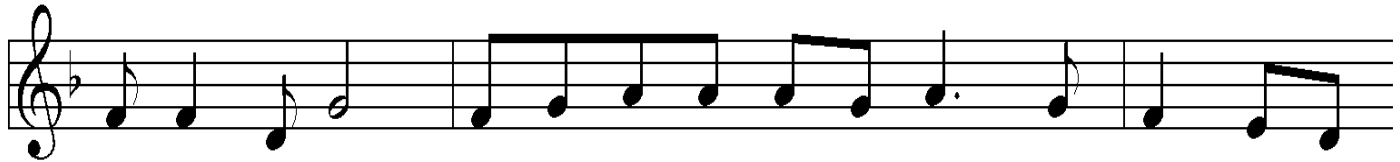
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

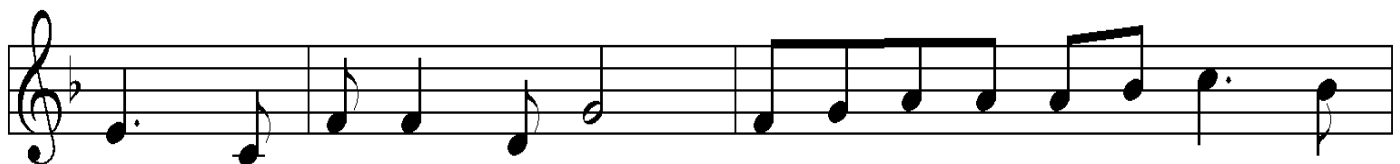
LAMB OF GOD



☞ 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION is offered to all who are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and who recognize the Sacrament as the true body and blood of our Lord. Baptized children are also welcome to the Lord's table at St. David's with the guidance and consent of their parents or guardians.

This morning we Commune by **intinction**. The congregation will proceed down the center aisle and receive the host from the pastor. Then, those seated on the right will go right and those seated on the left will go left, receive the chalice from one of the Communion assistants by dipping the host into the chalice. Then everyone returns by the side aisles.

COMMUNION HYMN

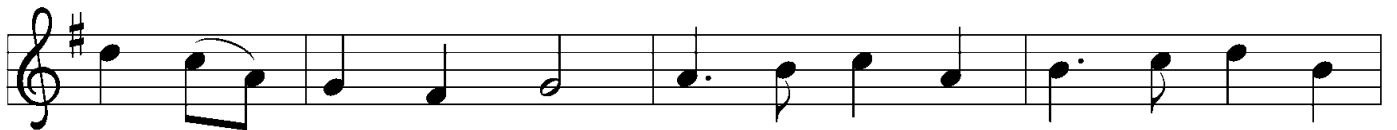
Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer



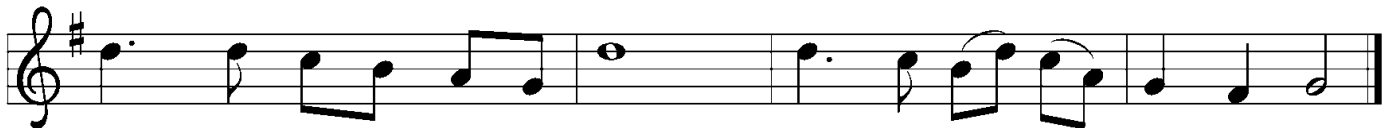
1 Guide me ev - er, great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this
2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain where the heal - ing
3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land. I am weak, but you are might - y; hold me
wa - ters flow; let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
fears sub - side; death of death and hell's de - struc - tion, land me



with your pow'r - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - 'rer, strong de - liv - 'rer,
safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs and prais - es, songs and prais - es



feed me now and ev - er - more, feed me now and ev - er - more.
shield me with your might - y arm, shield me with your might - y arm.
I will raise for - ev - er - more, I will raise for - ev - er - more.

Text: William Williams, 1717–1791; tr. William Williams and Peter Williams, 1722–1796, alt.
Music: CWM RHONDDA, John Hughes, 1873–1932

After all have returned to their places, the minister may say these or similar words.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

POST COMMUNION CANTICLE



☩ Lord, now you let your ser- vant go in peace; your word has been ful- filled.



My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre- pared in the



sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: A light to re- veal you to the



na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.



Glo- ry to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it,



as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for - ev - er. A - men

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

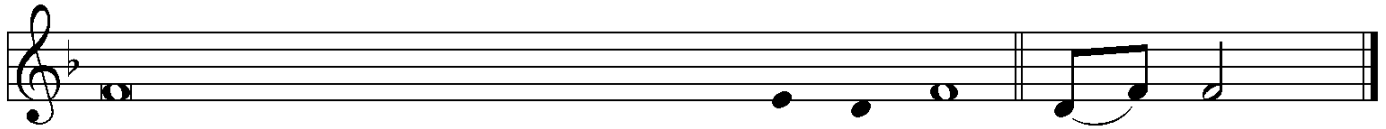
Let us pray.

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Silence for reflection.

BLESSING



♩ 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.

♩ A - men

SENDING HYMN

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: LLANGLOFFAN, Welsh tune, 19th cent.

Text © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc. 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com
800.442.3358 All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

Hymns/Music Reprinted with permission under One License#A-712819.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS006303.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

* February 26 (I) ASH WEDNESDAY * 1:30 PM & 7 PM Services

Acolytes-Need Volunteer (1:30); Danika Black (7)

Altar- Ronna Marisa (1:30); Debra Gindlesperger (7)

Communion Assts- Tom & Joanne Ravenscraft (1:30); Bill Bergman & Barry Springer (7)

Bread-Jack Winters (1:30); Marvin Gindlesperger (7)

Lectors – Deb Hart (1:30); Mary Jane McCready (7)

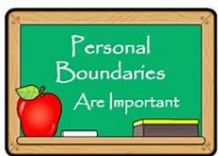
Ushers- Joe & Sue Risch (1:30); Marvin & Debra Gindlesperger (7)

Counters- Team 2: Joyce Gindlesperger, Mike & Melissa Grose & Dave Barabas



Lent starts with Ash Wednesday, February 26th with services at 1:30 PM & 7 PM. Wednesday evening Bible study and light meals are scheduled for March 4th, 18th, 25th & April 1st. ****Volunteers needed for soup & sandwiches. A signup sheet is available in the narthex. ****

The evening begins with a light meal of soup and sandwiches served at 5:30 PM. A Bible study will be led by Pastor Faron "Lenten Journey through the Holy Land" will begin at 6PM.



The Reverend Diane Wheatley is scheduled to be with us on Wednesday, March 11th at 6 pm to do a presentation on Healthy Boundaries. Boundary training is something that all pastors have been required to participate in for several years now and it has been noticed that many people in the congregations are not aware of these boundaries. They are put in place to protect the integrity of ministry and pastors make many decisions with these in mind. Council members were invited to participate in a presentation last year at Moxham Lutheran Church and agreed that it would be good to share this information with the entire congregation. Please plan to attend and participate in the conversation pertaining to this most important part of ministry.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

ASH WEDNESDAY

Love Inside Out

Today's liturgy holds together such a curious mix of words and actions. The prophet Joel's ancient cry to return to God with all one's heart flows seamlessly into prayers of confession and on to a worship leader's invitation to keep a holy Lent, a sacred springtime for the soul. Heart-rending words then pierce any illusion concerning one's mortality, as ashen crosses are smudged on foreheads and all who have gathered are invited to "remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

As we are thus marked (or wait to be so marked), the words of Jesus crash rather awkwardly when the gospel begins, "Beware of practicing your piety before others..." (Matt. 6:1). The text continues, of course, asking us to reflect on motives for such public practice. "Do not be like the hypocrites," Jesus says (Matt. 6:5). Don't engage in any of these things in order to be praised or seen by others.

No, instead of playing to the crowd, in this gospel Jesus reminds us that (much like wearing an ashen cross on one's forehead) actions of giving generously, praying ceaselessly, and fasting are to be oriented toward a renewed *inner* being, not rooted in desire for external praise or accolade. All the practices we associate with Lent help us lean into selves that are in the process of being renewed and deepened in relationship with both God and neighbor.

Ash Wednesday's jumble of dissonant words and actions helps us begin this season of sacred truth-telling grounded in awareness of what is deathly and fragile, but also drawn more deeply into the abundance of God's steadfast love. Today's invitation to return to God with all our being welcomes us *as we are*: our whole selves longing to be made new, always embraced by God's saving love in Jesus.