

Ash Wednesday 2026

A Service of Confession, Repentance, and Renewal in Christ

Welcome, guests and visitors. Today begins the season of Lent, a 40-day journey of reflection and repentance that leads us to Holy Week and the celebration of our Lord's resurrection. Ash Wednesday invites us to hear God's call to return to Him, to confess our sins, and to receive His forgiveness in Christ.

Welcome and Invocation

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Opening Sentences

P: Let us read responsively by whole verse, Psalm 51:1-17

P: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

C: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

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

C: Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

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

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

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

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

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

C: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

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

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

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

C: Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.

P: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

C: For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

P: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Hymn of Invocation

LSB 956 "Create in Me"

**Confession and Imposition of Ashes
Call to Repentance**

P: A reading from the book of Joel 2:12–19

"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and 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. 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? Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather 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. Between 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?' " Then the Lord became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. The 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.”

Corporate Confession of Sins

P: O almighty God, merciful Father,

C: I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

Imposition of Ashes

Worshippers may come forward.

*The pastor marks the forehead with ashes in the sign of the cross, saying:
“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*

(Visitors are welcome to participate or remain seated.)

Absolution

P: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Service of the Word

Epistle Reading

P: The Epistle is from 2 Corinthians, the sixth chapter.

“We implore 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. Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For 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. We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as

servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.”

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel

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

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

Verses 1-6 *“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. “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. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “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. But 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.” (Verses 16–21) “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. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that 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. “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in*

heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon Hymn

LSB 609 "Jesus Sinners Doth Receive"

Sermon

Prayer of the Church

P: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

[Intercessions]

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord Jesus, 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.

Benediction

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

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

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn

LSB 418 "O Lord, throughout These Forty Days"

P: Go in peace and serve the Lord

C: Thanks be to God!