

Grace Lutheran Church
Pastor Cris Escher

Ash Wednesday - The Greatest

March 5, 2025

Noon and 7 P.M.



- OPENING RESPONSE

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

PEOPLE: **Amen**

Pastor: At the name of Jesus every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

PEOPLE: **Our knees bow, and our tongues confess his name!**

Pastor: Always be prepared to give a reason for the hope that you have as a Christian.

PEOPLE: **We hope in Jesus, the crucified and risen one!**

Pastor: Together we proclaim the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

PEOPLE: **Praise to the Lord for calling us into the light!**

- THE OPENING HYMN

“Be Thou My Vision” (ancient Irish hymn)

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| 1. Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light | 3. Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and Thou only first in my heart
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art |
| 2. Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one | 4. High King of heaven, my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright
heaven's sun
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all |

- CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: 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!

PEOPLE: **Be merciful, be merciful, O God.**

Pastor: 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 may be justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

PEOPLE: **Be merciful, be merciful, O God.**

Pastor: 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.

PEOPLE: **Be merciful, be merciful, O God.**

Pastor: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not 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.

PEOPLE: **Be merciful, be merciful, O God.**

Pastor: Brothers and sisters, God is merciful and kind. He does not leave us in our sin, but loves and forgives us in Christ. As a called and ordained servant of the Word, in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

PEOPLE: **Amen**

- Prayer of the Day

Pastor: *Lord God, heavenly Father, you desire to be merciful and are always more willing to pardon than condemn. Listen to the prayers of your penitent people, and in your goodness set free all who are trapped in sin. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

PEOPLE: **Amen.**

THE FIRST LESSON

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

THE HOLY GOSPEL (part 1)

Matthew 18:1-6

THE HOLY GOSPEL (part 2)

Matthew 20:20-28

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: THANKS BE TO GOD.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: THANKS BE TO GOD

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord

PEOPLE: PRAISE TO YOU, O CHRIST

- APOSTLES CREED

- THE SERMON - The Greatest

- THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Pastor: We are all born weak and helpless.

PEOPLE: All lead the same short, troubled life.

Pastor: We grow and wither as quickly as flowers; we disappear like shadows.

PEOPLE: In the midst of life, we are in death.

Pastor: To whom can we go for help, but to you, Lord God,

PEOPLE: though you are rightly displeased because of our sins?

Pastor: And yet, Lord God Almighty, most holy and most merciful Savior,

PEOPLE: deliver us from the bitterness of eternal death.

Pastor: You know the secrets of our hearts;

PEOPLE: mercifully hear us, most worthy judge eternal;

Pastor: keep us, at our last hour, in the consolation of your love.

PEOPLE: Amen

Pastor: Dust we are and to dust we shall return.

PEOPLE: Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Pastor: May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and penitence and a reminder that we receive eternal life by God's gift alone, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

PEOPLE: Amen

Those who desire to receive ashes may come forward to receive ashes. Children as well as adults are invited to participate. Pastor makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each person with ashes, saying, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return."

- PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: O Lord, we remember this day that we are dust

PEOPLE: AND TO DUST WE SHALL RETURN.

Pastor: O Father, we commit our spirit to you.

PEOPLE: OUR LIVES ARE IN YOUR HANDS.

Pastor: O Father, we commit to you the life of the world.

PEOPLE: OUR WORLD IS IN YOUR HANDS.

Pastor: O Father, we commit to you the church, your people everywhere,
and this congregation.

PEOPLE: OUR COMMUNITY IS IN YOUR HANDS.

Pastor: O Father, we commit to your hands the sick and suffering.
We commit to your hands those who grieve.
We commit all these lives to your gracious mercy.

PEOPLE: OUR FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES ARE IN YOUR HANDS.

Pastor: All these burdens and cares, and all that weighs upon our hearts, we lift up to you,
PEOPLE: FROM OUR HANDS TO YOUR HANDS.

Pastor: In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

PEOPLE: AMEN

- THE LORD'S PRAYER

- THE BLESSING

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you his peace.

PEOPLE: AMEN.

- THE CLOSING HYMN

"Savior, When in Dust to Thee" (LSB 419 Vs 1,3,4)

- 1. Savior, when in dust to Thee, low we bow the adoring knee;
When, repentant, to the skies scarce we lift our weeping eyes;
O, by all Thy pains and woe suffered once for us below,
Bending from Thy throne on high, hear our penitential cry!**
- 3. By Thine hour of dire despair, by Thine agony of prayer,
By the cross, the nail, the thorn, piercing spear, and torturing scorn,
By the gloom that veiled skies O'er the dreadful sacrifice,
Listen to our humble sigh; hear our penitential cry!**
- 4. By Thy deep expiring groan, by the sad sepulchral stone,
By the vault whose dark abode held in vain the rising God,
O, from earth to heav'n restored, mighty, re-ascended Lord,
Bending from Thy throne on high, hear our penitential cry!**

- SENDING

Pastor: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

PEOPLE: THANKS BE TO GOD.