



Ascension Lutheran Church
Ash Wednesday – February 14, 2024

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Welcome to all who are attending our service today. We are glad you are with us! To all guests and visitors, we especially extend our hands of friendship. May God bless the worship time for each one of you. Please come again!

NURSERY AVAILABLE We have an unstaffed nursery for your convenience and privacy. The nursery has audio and video so you may hear and see the worship service while attending to your child.

Lenten Midweek Series 2024

Each year on Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion, we read the full Passion account at the end of the service. The Passion narrates Jesus' last hours of life, including His crucifixion and burial. Throughout most of the Church's history, Palm Sunday solely focused on Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. Church services typically featured a processional of palms, accompanied by an atmosphere of excitement as the Savior had arrived. However, many Christians attending only Sunday services missed the profound experience of the Passion, an integral part of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services. In response, the Church incorporated the complete Passion account reading at the conclusion of Palm Sunday services to remind those who attend only on Sundays of the suffering and death that Jesus endured for our redemption.

This year, we will dedicate additional time to the Passion account. Each midweek service in Lent will include a reading from the Gospel of Luke. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, we will journey through the final hours of Jesus' life. Luke provides unique insights into this important time, offering much to gain from contemplation and meditation on this writing. Our readings will be drawn from Luke 22-24, exploring instances where evil sought to prevail, but God's will ultimately triumphed for good. Rather than confining your exposure to the Passion account to Palm Sunday alone, we invite you to join us every Wednesday to reflect on our Savior's last hours. Your Lenten journey promises to be enriched with new insights and a deeper appreciation for the saving grace of God.

+ PREPARATION +

Theme: “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.”

Today reminds us of the Passover Meal. Not just the Passover celebrated by Jews after their release from bondage in Egypt, but a more important event with the institution of the Lord’s Supper. God’s people ended up in Egypt because Joseph’s brothers meant evil, but the Lord meant it for good. Later, Pharaoh enslaved and brutalized the Hebrews, but again, what was meant for evil, God used for good. Although Ash Wednesday reminds us of our sin and its consequences, namely death, we are also reminded of the cross and God’s claim on us. Evil is constantly at hand, but the plans and will of God work for good.

Prelude

Welcome

Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Psalm 51:1-13 (**C** sung response – tune: *Gethsemane*)

- P** Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love. According to Your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.
- C** **Cleanse my heart, O God, from sin;
Make my spirit pure within.**
- P** Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgression, and my sin is ever before me.
- C** **Let Your Holy Spirit be
My companion constantly.**
- P** Against You, You alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight; so You are right in judging me; You are justified in condemning me.
- C** **Fill my life once more with praise.
I will serve You all my days.**
- P** I have been evil from the day I was born, a sinner from my mother's womb. Sincerity and truth are what You require; fill my mind with Your wisdom.
- C** **Cleanse my heart, O God, from sin;
Make my spirit right within.**
- P** Let me hear of joy and gladness; let the bones that You have crushed rejoice.
- C** **Let my tongue its skill employ
To proclaim Your saving joy.**
- P** Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
- C** **In Your mercy pity me;
From transgression set me free.**

- P** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
- C** **Cleanse my heart, O God, from sin; Make my spirit pure within.**
- P** Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.
- C** **Let Your Holy Spirit be My companion constantly.**
- P** Give me the joy of Your saving help again, and sustain me with Your bountiful Spirit.
- C** **Let my tongue its skill employ To proclaim Your saving joy.**
- P** Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You.

Confession and Absolution

- P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- C** **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
- C** **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You 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; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**
- P** The ashes of our sin remind us of the curse of death and our need for Your redemption.
- C** **For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us and renew us. Mark us with Your cross and take our sins from us. Help us to delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

P Almighty God in His mercy delivered His Son over to the death of the cross to bear the burden of our brokenness, becoming sin for us “so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). The ashes of your sin have been taken away and you have been marked and redeemed by Christ, the Crucified. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

+ IMPOSITION OF ASHES +

P On Ash Wednesday, many congregations practice the imposition of ashes. But why? The imposition of ashes can be a powerful, tactile reminder of both Law and Gospel in which worshipers of any age can take part. Many times, the words “dust you are, and to dust you shall return” are spoken as ashes are received on the forehead. These words remind us that as a result of sin and the fall, death is a reality.

Ashes also call to mind the practice in Scripture of wearing sackcloth and ashes as a sign of sorrow and repentance of sin. Typically, however, the ashes are marked in the shape of the cross, pointing us to the promise of forgiveness of sin through Jesus’ crucifixion for us. After leaving worship, we will each eventually wash off the ashen cross. As we splash water on our foreheads, we remember our Baptism, where we were cleansed of sin through water and the Word. Whether literally marked with ashes or not, we all enter this penitential season of Lent praying that God Almighty would have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

(Worshipers who desire to receive ashes come forward at this time and stand before the pastor. The pastor applies the ashes in the shape of the cross to the forehead or hand while saying to each person, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”)

+ HYMNS DURING THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES +

Savior, When in Dust to Thee

- 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!

- 2 By Thy helpless infant years,
By Thy life of want and tears,
 By Thy days of deep distress
 In the savage wilderness,
By the dread, mysterious hour
Of the_insulting tempter's pow'r,
 Turn, O turn a fav'ring eye;
 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 the 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, reascended Lord,
 Bending from Thy throne on high,
 Hear our penitential cry!

Savior, When in Dust to Thee, Text: Robert Grant, 1779–1838, alt., Text: Public domain

Before the Throne of God Above

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong, a perfect plea:
A great High Priest, whose name is Love,
Who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart;
I know that while in heav'n He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart,
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look, and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God, the just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me,
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there! The risen Lamb!
My perfect, spotless righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace!
At one with Him, I cannot die,
My soul is purchased by His blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ, my Savior and my God,
With Christ, my Savior and my God.

Before the Throne of God Above, Text: Charitie L. de Chenez, 1841–1923, Text: Public domain

Salutation

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who come to You in repentance and faith. Cleanse us from the ashes of our sin that we may hold fast to the promise that we have been marked and redeemed by the Christ, the Crucified, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

+ THE WORD +

Old Testament

Joel 2:12-19 (ESV)

¹² “Yet even now,” declares the LORD,
“return to Me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³and 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.

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;
consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶gather 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.

¹⁷Between 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?”

¹⁸Then the LORD became jealous for His land
and had pity on His people.

¹⁹The 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.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 (ESV)

^{20b}We implore 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.

¹Working together with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For 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. ³We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the twenty-second chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹ Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. ² And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put Him to death, for they feared the people. ³ Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. ⁴ He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them. ⁵ And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. ⁶ So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of a crowd. ⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." ⁹ They said to Him, "Where will You have us prepare it?" ¹⁰ He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters ¹¹ and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?' ¹² And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." ¹³ And they went and found it just as He had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Prayer/Love in Action Requests Gathered

Were You There

Were you there when they readied for the meal?
Were you there when they readied for the meal?
Oh...sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they readied for the meal?

Were you there when they plotted for His death?
Were you there when they plotted for His death?
Oh...sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they plotted for His death?

Were you there when the Passover was served?
Were you there when the Passover was served?
Oh...sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the Passover was served?

Were you there when the Savior showed His love?
Were you there when the Savior showed His love?
Oh...sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the Savior showed His love?

Sermon Pr. Jim Sprengle
“You Meant It for Evil, but God Meant It for Good” Luke 22:1-13

Tithes and Offerings

(Our offerings are made as an act of worship, given in loving response to all that God has graciously given us, both materially and spiritually.)

(7:00 pm) A Willing Heart
(based on Psalm 51:10-12)

Tom Fettke

Ascension Choir

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Create in me a pure heart, O God.
May Your Spirit and presence be near me.
And restore unto me the Joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me with Your gracious Spirit.

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Prayer of the Church

- P** As we begin our journey through this season of repentance and renewal, let us return to the Lord, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. O God, You call us to turn from sin and to live in the joy and freedom of the forgiveness earned through the merits of Jesus Christ. Give us strength to persevere on our Lenten journey. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**

P O God, You call people everywhere to work in harmony for the good of all humanity. Empower the leaders of the nations to be peacemakers. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P O God, grant compassion to all who minister to the sick and infirm: medical professionals, healing practitioners, and all caregivers. Show Your mercy to those who are ill, especially... and bring them peace of mind and heart. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P O God, You call us to turn from our sin and to live for You alone. Guide us through these forty days of Lent to a fuller appreciation of Your baptismal grace. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Merciful God, hear our cry when we call to You; renew and uphold us with Your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

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.**

Luther's Evening Prayer

C **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.**

Closing Scripture

P Return to the LORD, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,
C **slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.** (Joel 2:13)

P For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing,
C **but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.** (1 Corinthians 1:18)

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.**

Abide With Me

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou Who changest not, abide with me.

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if Thou abide with me!

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Dismissal

P Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God!**

Acknowledgments

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Ascension Lutheran Church

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Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday 9am to 3pm

Our Mission Statement:

~Go and Share Jesus Christ~

Our Vision Statement:

“Take part...Join Jesus on His mission.”

The members of Ascension Lutheran Church are committed to being God’s witnesses in Gresham, and in all of Portland and the Northwest, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8):

With the universal Christian Church, we believe, teach and respond to the love of the Triune God—the Father, Creator of all that exists; the Son Jesus Christ, Who left His home in Heaven to become flesh and blood, to suffer and die for the sins of all peoples of the world, and Who rose from the grave, victorious over sin, death and the devil, that we too might live with Him in Heaven; and the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts in Christ Jesus through God’s Word and Sacrament. The three Persons of the Holy Trinity are one God, co-equal and co-eternal. The core teachings of our faith from the Lutheran perspective can be summarized in three short phrases: Grace alone, Scripture alone, Faith alone.

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