

 **ASH**
Wednesday



Tree of Life Lutheran Church

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TREE OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

A member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

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Welcome!

Thank you for joining us for worship this evening. In our service tonight we gather before our heavenly Father to offer him our worship and praise. We also gather to strengthen ourselves through the study of God's holy and powerful Word. May he bless our worship and study this evening!

Today's Focus

Return to the Lord! Ash Wednesday calls us to a forty-day journey of repentance and renewal. The ashes upon our heads testify: Man, you are mortal; prepare to meet your God! Recognition of our sin leads us to cry for mercy and trust in God's promised forgiveness. Note the sweet Gospel phrases that dominate the thought of every part of the Propers. Return to the Lord, for he is gracious. Having obtained his pardon, we seek a renewal of our faith and life that we might live as baptized children of God.

INVOCATION

L: In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BEGINNING OF LENT

L: Brothers and sisters in Christ, God created us to know joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. By our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come

under his judgment but to turn to him and live. Therefore, God in his mercy has sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take our place under the law, to suffer for us, and to die the death we deserve. God made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.

During the 40 days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

I invite you, therefore, to confess your sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit yourselves to this struggle. Let us be silent. Let us be still. Let us pause now for a time of reflection and self-examination.

Silence for reflection and examination.

CONFESSION OF SINS

L: Most holy and merciful Father,

**C: We confess to you and to one another that we have sinned by our own fault,
by our own grievous fault
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.**

L: 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, Lord.

L: 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 the Holy Spirit.

C: Have mercy on us, Lord.

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

C: We confess to you, O Lord.

L: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, our manipulation of other people

C: We confess to you, O Lord.

L: Our anger when our selfish aims are denied and our envy of those more fortunate
than ourselves

C: We confess to you, O Lord.

L: Our love of worldly goods and comforts and our dishonesty in daily life and work

C: We confess to you, O Lord.

L: Our negligence in worship and prayer and our failure to show the faith that is in us

C: We confess to you, O Lord.

L: Forgive us, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need
and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

C: Forgive us, O Lord.

L: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward others, and for our
prejudice and contempt for those who differ from us,

C: Forgive us, O Lord.

L: For what we think or say or do that is at variance with your will,

C: Forgive us, O Lord.

L: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

C: Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those who desire to receive the sign of ashes come forward. Baptized children may come forward at their parents' discretion.

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

After all who desire have received ashes, the minister says:

L: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation

C: That we may show forth your glory in the world.

L: By the cross and suffering of your Son, O Lord,

C: Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

ABSOLUTION OF SINS

L: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live.

Therefore, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

HYMN

Jesus, Refuge of the Weary
Christian Worship Hymn 108

Jesus, Refuge of the weary, Blest Redeemer, whom we love,
Fountain in life's desert dreary, Savior from the world above,
Oh, how oft your eyes, offended, Gaze upon a sinner's fall!
Yet, upon the cross extended, You endured the pain of all.

Dare we pass that cross unheeding, Breathing no repentant vow,
As we see you wounded, bleeding, See your thorn-encircled brow?
Since your sinless death has brought us Life eternal, peace, and rest,
Only what your grace has taught us Calms the sinner's deep distress.

Jesus, may our hearts be burning With more fervent love for you!
May our eyes be ever turning To behold your cross anew,
Till in glory, parted never From the blessed Savior's side,
Graven in our hearts forever, Dwell the cross, the Crucified!

Text: Girolamo Savonarola, 1452–98; tr. Jane F. Wilde, 1826–96, alt.

SALUTATION

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Almighty and merciful God, you never despise what you have made and always forgive those who turn to you. Create in us such new and contrite hearts that we may truly repent of our sins and obtain your full and gracious pardon; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 59:12-20

¹² For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities:

¹³ rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived.

¹⁴ So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter.

¹⁵ Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice.

¹⁶ He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him.

¹⁷ He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

¹⁸ According to what they have done, so will he repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes; he will repay the islands their due.

¹⁹ From the west, men will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along.

²⁰ "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the LORD. (NIV 1984)

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 51a

Christian Worship page 86

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love.

Wash away all my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquity.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

SECOND LESSON

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:2

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. ¹As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. ²For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. (NIV 1984)

VERSE OF THE DAY

Joel 2:13

L: Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

GOSPEL

Luke 18:9-14

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

¹⁴“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (NIV 1984)

APOSTLES' CREED

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
 and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

HYMN OF THE DAY

Lord, to You I Make Confession
Christian Worship Hymn 302

Lord, to you I make confession:
I have sinned and gone astray;
I have multiplied transgression,
Chosen for myself my way.
Led by you to see my errors,
Lord, I tremble at your terrors.

For your Son has suffered for me,
Giv'n himself to rescue me,
Died to save me and restore me,
Reconciled and set me free.
Jesus' cross alone can vanquish
These dark fears and soothe this anguish.

Yet, though conscience' voice appall me,
Father, I will seek your face.
Though your child I dare not call me,
Yet receive me to your grace.
Do not for my sins forsake me;
Do not let your wrath o'ertake me.

Lord, on you I cast my burden—
Sink it in the depths below!
Let me know your gracious pardon;
Wash me, make me white as snow.
Let your Spirit leave me never;
Make me only yours forever.

SERMON

Luke 18:9-14

“Repent: Turn to Jesus and Not to Yourself”

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

HYMN

Before You, God, the Judge of All
Christian Worship Hymn 306

Before you, God, the Judge of all,
With grief and shame I humbly fall.
I see my sins against you, Lord,
My sins of thought and deed and word.
They press me sore; to you I flee:
O God, be merciful to me!

O Lord, my God, to you I pray:
Oh, cast me not in wrath away!
Let your good Spirit ne'er depart,
But let him draw to you my heart
That truly penitent I be:
O God, be merciful to me!

O Jesus, let your precious blood
Be to my soul a cleansing flood.
Turn not, O Lord, your guest away,
But grant that justified I may
Go to my house at peace to be:
O God, be merciful to me!

Text: Magnus B. Landstad, 1802–80; tr. Carl Döving, 1867–1937, alt.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

L: Lord God, all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works come from you.
Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts
may be set to obey your commandments. Defend us also from the fear of our
enemies that we may live in peace and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ
our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
forever.

C: Amen.

BLESSING

L: The grace of our Lord † Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Chief of Sinners Though I Be
Christian Worship Hymn 385; st 1 & 5

Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed his blood for me,
Died that I might live on high, Lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine, I am his and he is mine!

Strengthen me, O gracious Lord, By your Spirit and your word.
When my wayward heart would stray, Keep me in the narrow way;
Grace in time of need supply While I live and when I die.

Text: William McComb, 1793–c. 1870, alt.