

Zion Lutheran

**Mission: Creating Community Through
God's Love and Guidance**



**ASH
WEDNESDAY**

February 14, 2024

Why and how do we use ashes on Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is the Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter and the first day of Lent. The day is named for the practice of imposing ashes, a practice which many Lutherans have found to be a very meaningful part of practicing their faith.

Using ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in the Bible (e.g., Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26; Matthew 11:21). The early Christians adopted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence. Ashes symbolize several aspects of our human existence:

- Ashes remind us of God's condemnation of sin, as God said to Adam, "Dust you are and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19).
- Ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. They were used anciently in the absence of soap. On Ash Wednesday ashes are a penitential substitute for water as a reminder of our baptism.
- Ashes remind us of the shortness of human life, for it is said as we are buried: "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."
- Ashes are a symbol of our need to repent, confess our sins, and return to God.

In the Ash Wednesday liturgy, the confession and imposition of ashes follow the proclamation of the Word of God in biblical readings, sermon, and song. This confession marks the beginning of a season of penitence. The Maundy Thursday absolution is the structural response to the Ash Wednesday confession, marking off Lent as a penitential time.

ORDER OF SERVICE

(The assembly speaks the bold print)

Worship with Holy Communion

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

The assembly gathers in silence.

OPENING HYMN #319 “O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days”

GREETING

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 receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Joel 2: 12-17

A reading from Joel.

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?' "

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 51

Read Responsively

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

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

³For I know my offenses and my sin is ever before me.

⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

⁵Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.

⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

⁸**Let me hear joy and gladness; that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

⁹Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

¹⁰**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

¹¹Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹²**Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

¹³Let me teach your ways to offenders, and sinners shall be restored to you.

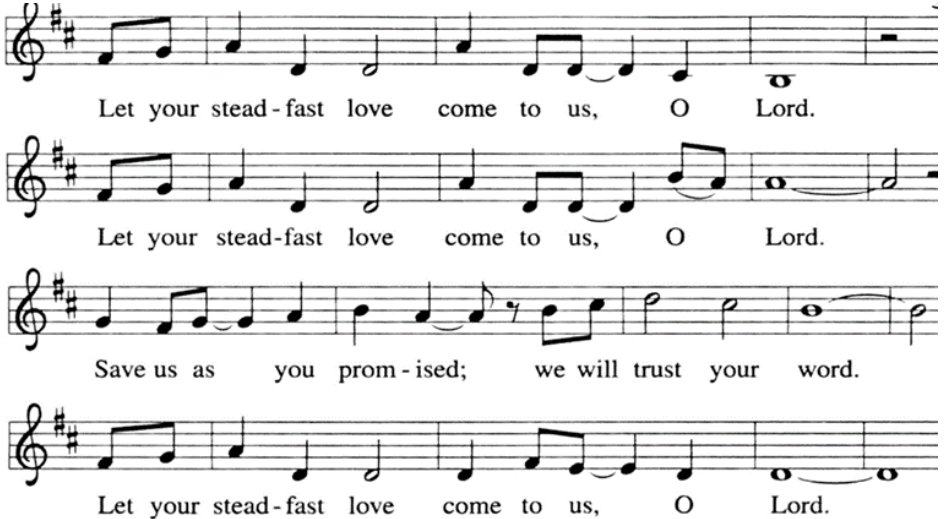
¹⁴**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

¹⁵O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

¹⁶**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:16-21

The holy gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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.**

SERMON

Pastor Mike

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Lord, Save Your World”

Lord, Save Your World



1 Lord, save your world; in bit - ter need to
 2 Lord, save your world; our souls are bound in
 3 Lord, save your world; we strive in vain to
 4 Lord, save your world, since you have sent the
 5 Then save us now, by Je - sus' pow'r, and



you your chil - dren raise their plea; we wait your lib - er -
 i - ron chains of fear and pride; high walls of ig - no -
 save our - selves with - out your aid; what skill and sci - ence
 Sav - ior whom we sore - ly need; for us his tears and
 use the lives your love sets free to bring at last the



at - ing deed to sig - nal hope and set us free.
 rance a - bound and fac - es from each oth - er hide.
 slow - ly gain is seen to e - vil ends be - trayed.
 blood were spent that from our bonds we might be freed.
 glo - rious hour when all shall find your lib - er - ty.

Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901–1984, alt.
 Music: KEDRON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

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INVITATION TO LENT

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most holy and merciful God,

we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

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, O God.

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.
Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

OBOE SOLO

Wendy Sachs

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Please come forward, as you desire, to receive ashes.

After those who desire ashes have received them, all may kneel or sit, and the minister continues.

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 Savior,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **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 our thanks and praise.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN #461 "All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly"

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God,
at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.
As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,
now make us one loaf to feed the world;
in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.
Amen.

BLESSING

Beloved,
we are God's own people,
holy, washed, renewed.
God bless you and keep you,
shower you with mercy,
fill you with courage,
and give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN #629

“Abide With Me”

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share your bread.

**Creating Community through God’s Love and Guidance — thanks
be to God!**

POSTLUDE

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