

# ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH (NALC)

## Ash Wednesday Service

February 18, 2026

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*Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the forty-day season of Lent.. We come together today in humble and honest reflection on our own sinfulness, trusting in the forgiveness of our merciful Lord and in the promise that he has won for us on the cross.*

Prelude

Opening Reading      Psalm 51      LBW Pg. 239

Hymn      "O Lord Throughout ...."      LBW Pg. 99

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

- P. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- C. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen
- P. Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus said: "If any would after me, let them take up their cross and follow me.
- C. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.
- P. Let us lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith—who for the sake of joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.
- C. Lord, we believe, help us in our unbelief.

Choir Anthem

### **Prayers of Confession and Repentance:**

- P. Let us draw near to God with an honest and open heart, confessing our sins, to God, the Father, and appealing to Him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness. (silence for reflection and self examination)
- P. Almighty God,

- C. We confess to you that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed by what we have done and left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbor as ourselves.
- P. We have received your many blessings with a lack of gratitude and have failed to be good stewards of your creation.
- C. Have mercy on us, Lord.
- P. We have followed our own selfish will and ways and have failed to be your trusting and obedient servants.
- C. Have mercy on us, Lord.
- P. We confess to you, Lord, all our unfaithfulness—our fear, our anger, our pride, and our trust in our own righteousness.
- C. Accept our repentance, Lord.
- P. We confess to you, Lord, our lack of concern for the needs of others, and our sense of entitlement to all we possess.
- C. Accept our repentance, Lord.
- P. We confess to you, Lord, our negligence in worship and our rejection of your Word in our lives.
- C. Accept our repentance, Lord.
- P. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within us.
- C. Cast us not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from us. Give us the joy of your saving help again, and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Amen

Hymn

“Lord Jesus Think on Me”

LBW Pg. 309

### **The Imposition of Ashes**

P. As children of a fallen humanity, each of us shares in the consequences of human sin, in the words that the Lord first spoke to Adam, he now reminds us all: “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, you are dust and to dust you shall return. Therefore, face-to-face, in the presence of God, we offer our confession in the spirit of our ancestor Job, who prayed.

C. I heard you by hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you, Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.

P. As a sign of repentance, I now ask those who wish to do so to come forward to receive the mark of the cross in ashes upon their brow.

## C The Promise of Christ

- P. Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation  
C. That we may show forth your glory in the world.  
P. By the cross and passion of your Son, our Lord  
C. bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.  
P. In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you and for his sake God forgives you all your sins.  
By His Holy Spirit, may he grant you repentance, that you may live with him in righteousness and purity forever through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C. Amen

- First Lesson: Joel 2:12-19  
Psalm Psalm 51:1-19  
Second Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10  
Gospel Verse: "Return to the Lord...." LBW Pg. 63  
Gospel Lesson: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21  
Sermon Pastor Andrea Taphorn  
Sermon Hymn "I Lay My Sins on Jesus" LBW Pg. 305  
Nicene Creed LBW Pg. 64  
Offering & Offering Prayers  
Prayers of the Church (see insert)  
Great Thanksgiving LBW Pg 68-69  
Words of Institution LBW Pg. 69  
Lord's Prayer  
Lamb of God LBW Pg. 72  
Distribution of Communion  
Pastoral Blessing  
Hymn "Abide with Me" LBW Pg.272  
Benediction of the Passion  
P. Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem...  
and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priest and  
Scribes who will condemn him to death.. And they will hand  
him over to the Gentiles who will mock him and scourge  
him and finally they will crucify him, But on the third day,  
he will rise.  
(congregation exits in silence)

# The Word of God



Ash Wednesday

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## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## First Reading: Joel 2:12-19

<sup>12</sup>"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>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? <sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>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?'" <sup>18</sup>Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. <sup>19</sup>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."

## Psalm 51:1-13 [14-19]

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | lovingkindness,\*  
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness\***  
**and cleanse me | from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know | my transgressions,\*  
and my sin is ev- | er before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you only | have I sinned\***  
**and done what is evil | in your sight.**

<sup>5</sup>And so you are justified | when you speak\*  
and upright | in your judgment.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, I have been wicked | from my birth,\***  
**a sinner from my | mother's womb.**

<sup>7</sup>For behold, you look for truth | deep within me,\*  
and will make me understand | wisdom secretly.

<sup>8</sup>**Purge me from my sin, and I | shall be pure;\***  
**wash me, and I shall be | clean indeed.**

<sup>9</sup>Make me hear of | joy and gladness,\*  
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.

<sup>10</sup>**Hide your face | from my sins\***  
**and blot out all | my iniquities.**

<sup>11</sup>Create in me a clean | heart, O God,\*  
and renew a right spir- | it within me.

<sup>12</sup>**Cast me not away | from your presence\***  
**and take not your Holy | Spirit from me.**

<sup>13</sup>Give me the joy of your saving | help again\*  
and sustain me with your bount- | iful Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>**I shall teach your ways | to the wicked,\***  
**and sinners shall re- | turn to you.**

<sup>15</sup>Deliver me from | death, O God,\*  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,  
O God of | my salvation.

<sup>16</sup>**Open my | lips, O LORD,\***  
**and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.**

<sup>17</sup>Had you desired it, I would have | offered sacrifice,\*  
but you take no delight | in burnt offerings.

<sup>18</sup>The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;\*

a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will | not despise.

<sup>19</sup>Be favorable and gra- | cious to Zion,\*  
and rebuild the walls | of Jerusalem.]

## **Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10**

<sup>20b</sup>We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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

## **Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said,] "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. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>“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. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>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.

<sup>19</sup>Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup>but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

**Ash Wednesday**

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**For Forgiveness and Repentance**

Most Merciful God, by your Spirit make us mindful of our transgressions. Through your Word draw us to repent of our sinfulness and turn our hearts toward you once again. Create in us clean hearts and renew a right spirit within us. Then, in your abundant mercy, restore to us the joy of your salvation. Lord in your mercy...

C. Hear our prayer.

**For Ash Wednesday**

Heavenly Father, through a small smudge of ash remind us that apart from you we are nothing. You are our source and life, our beginning and our end. In your boundless mercy, restore us to wholeness and welcome those who have wandered far from the embrace of your love and seek to return to you. Lord in your mercy...

C. Hear our prayer.

**For the Aging**

Most gracious God, even as we are reminded that we are dust and to dust we shall return, we cling to your promise to be with us always. Continue to uphold those to whom you have given many years with strength and dignity in your loving care. Abide with them, gracious God, that they might continue to bear witness to your unending presence. Lord in your mercy...

C. Hear our prayer.

**For Those Who Mourn**

Gracious Lord, we ask that you would comfort all those who mourn. Grant to all who are bereaved the comfort and hope that because Jesus Christ has risen, all who die in the Lord will live with you in our everlasting kingdom. Lord in your mercy...

C. Hear our prayer.