

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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MINISTERS: Every Member

PASTOR: The Rev. James E. Person, 717-695-7525



Ash Wednesday
February 17, 2021

MISSION STATEMENT: Nourished by Word and Sacrament, the mission of the members of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church is to spread God's Word in Jesus Christ through our thoughts, words, and actions, proclaiming God's good news for all to hear and live.

Please silence all electronic devices.

WELCOME! Please sign the Friendship Register (Red Folder) located in the hymnal rack and pass it on to your neighbors. Please observe Silent Meditation during the Prelude.

INTRODUCTION

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

GATHERING

The assembly gathers in silence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Jesus, The Very Thought of Thee*

~Diemer, arr. J. Dykes

INVITATION TO LENT

The assembly is seated. The presiding minister invites the assembly into the discipline of 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, to live in harmony with God, 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.

HYMN #325 *I Want Jesus to Walk with me*

CONFESSION OF SIN

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P God of heaven and earth, you come in close and make us yours. Equip us by your Spirit to confess our sin, embrace your forgiveness, and seek the way you set

before us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

P With honesty of heart, let us confess our sin.

Please kneel or sit as you are able. Silence is kept for reflection.

P Merciful God,

C forgive us. Our will is handcuffed to sin, and we cannot break free. We have spoken when we should have kept quiet.

Silence

P **We were silent when we should have said something.**

Silence

C We acted when we knew better.

Silence

C We were still when we know we should have moved.

Silence

C For the wrong we have done, for the good we have failed to do, have mercy on us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P People of God, look to the + Son, given to heal you and set you free because God loved the world so much. Take hold of life—eternal life!

C Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

People may come forward and kneel or stand to receive the ashes. The presiding minister marks the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:

P Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

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

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

P 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.

C **Amen.**

Stand GREETING

P The immeasurable grace of Christ Jesus, the rich mercy of God, and the unity of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

Sit FIRST READING - Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming Day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

Blow the trumpet in Zion;

 sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

 Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
 for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near —

 a day of darkness and gloom,

 a day of clouds and thick darkness!

 Like blackness spread upon the mountains

 a great and powerful army comes;

 their like has never been from of old,

 nor will be again after them

 in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the LORD,

 return to me with all your heart,

 with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

 rend 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.

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?
Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
gather 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.

Between 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?"

A The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-17

READ IN UNISON

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my
salvation,

and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.

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

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

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

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

*The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships.
Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of
Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into*

a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

P The Word of the Lord

C Thanks be to God

Stand Lenten Verse

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

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 6th chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL - Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever 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.

"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. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so 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.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and

steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

P The gospel of the Lord.

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

SERMON

HYMN #592 *Just As I Am*

Stand PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P Lord in your mercy.

C **Hear our prayer.**

P We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

OFFERING PRAYER

P Generous God,

C **you feed us with the harvest of the land, and you provide for our every need. Receive our gifts of money, imagination, and labor, and transform them into a feast that welcomes all, in Jesus Christ, our host and our guest.**

C **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

SENDING

BLESSING

P God, who fills the creation with abundance, Christ, who

spreads his arms in forgiveness, Holy Spirit, who
draws ever near to us, + bless you and bring you to
life everlasting.

C Amen.

Hymn #338 *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Remember the poor.

C We will. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE *Lord, Take my Hand and Lead me* ~ *F.Silcher*

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