

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Ash Wednesday Service

Holy Communion 7:00 PM

February 14, 2024

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the forty-day season of Lent. Its name is taken from the ancient biblical tradition of using ashes as a sign of repentance and human mortality. We come together tonight 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 in the cross.

(the congregation enters in silence)

***Opening Reading: Psalm 51 (read responsively)**

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; 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 transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

⁴**Against You only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight.**

⁵And so You are justified when You speak and upright in Your judgment.

⁶**Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother's womb.**

⁷For behold, You look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

⁸**Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be clean in deed.**

⁹Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body You have broken may rejoice.

¹⁰**Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.**

¹¹Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

¹²**Cast me not away from Your presence and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.**

¹³Give me the joy of Your saving help again and sustain me with Your bountiful Spirit.

[¹⁴I shall teach Your ways to the wicked, and sinners shall return to You.

¹⁵Deliver me from death, O God, and my tongue shall sing of Your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

¹⁶Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim Your praise.

¹⁷Had You desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, but You take no delight in burnt offerings.

¹⁸The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

¹⁹Be favorable and gracious to Zion, and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.]

***Processional Hymn**

Just As I Am, Without One Plea

ELW HYMN #592

*Call to Worship:

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

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 come after Me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me." (Mark 8:34)

C: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. (Psalm 23:4)

P: Let us lay aside every weight and the 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 the 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. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

C: Lord, we believe; help us in our unbelief. (Mark 9:24)

Prayers of Confession and Repentance: (please kneel)

P: Let us draw near to God with an honest 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 is observed 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 by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors 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 have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven, and have failed to be Your witnesses in the world.

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.

The Imposition of Ashes (please be seated)

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 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." (Genesis 3:19)

Therefore, face-to-face, in the presence of God, we offer our confession in the spirit of our ancestor Job, who prayed:

C: I had heard You be the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:5-6)

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 or hand.

(To each: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.")

*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 true repentance, that you may live with Him in righteousness and purity forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Adult Choir

Bread of Life

Scripture Lesson: Joel 2:12-19

Scripture Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Bell Choir

Softly and Tenderly

*Gospel Acclamation during Lent

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

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

Sermon

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

***ELW Hymn #335**

Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

*Prayers of the Church (respond with: "Hear our prayer")

*Sharing of God's Peace

*Great Thanksgiving

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*Words of Institution

*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.

*Lamb of God

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Distribution of Communion

ELW HYMN # 471

Let Us Break Bread Together On Our Knees

*Pastoral Blessing

***ELW HYMN #629**

Abide With Me

***Prediction of the Passion**

P: Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem...

And the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the 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...

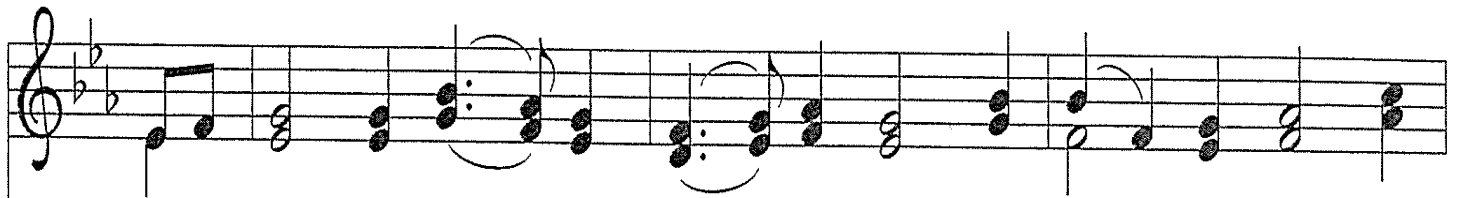
But on the third day, He will rise.

(the congregation exits in silence)

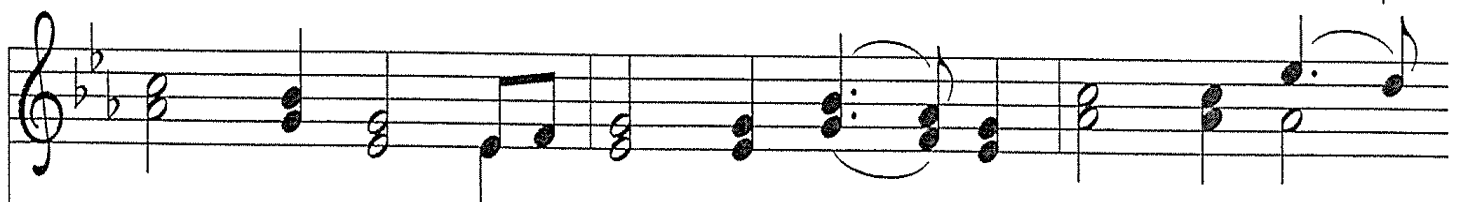
Please pray for those in need of healing:

Janet Burke, Shari Kienzle, Susan Westott, baby Isaac Christian, the Pollana family, Sylvia Sunstrum, Fritz Group, Eric Group, Danielle Sherman, Amy Verderber, Tillie and Larry, Lou Mayne, Judy, Debbie, Sayward, Jim H., Barbara Mounts, Chiquita Pearson, Tim and Sharon, Judy Coble, Gary Conti, Linnese, Karen and John, Neil Bassi, Phyllis Daniels, Simon Thorp, Josh, Becky Wood, Apollos Yocca, Alex Houck, Bridgette, Rhonda Hendrickson, Ron Erdmann, Belinda, Wilda Durbin, Stacy Carroll, Leann Vitteck, Isabella & family, James, Billie Sue Serbak, Lori Mauer, Jennifer Brown, Mark Black, Emma Solich, Kenny & Josh Carl, Cindi and John Moore, Sean Shearer, Ed Dupas, Sandy Salerno, Gavazzi family, Janelle Henderson, Rex Gibson, Mike Phipps, Holly Davis and family, Pat Dupas, and Rich Luketich.

Just As I Am, without One Plea



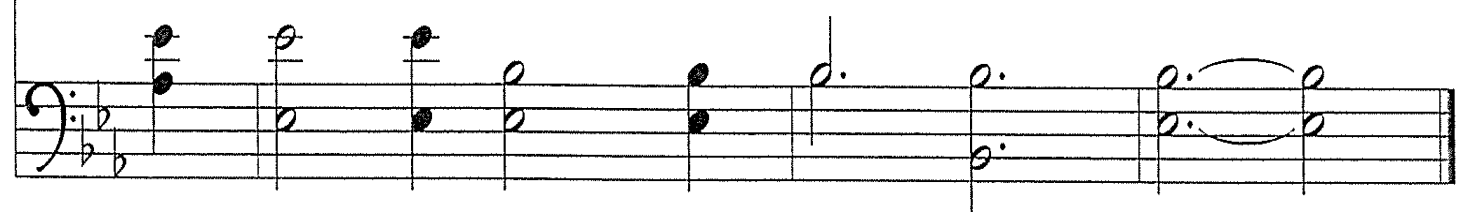
1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was
 2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y a con - flict,
 3 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt wel - come, par - don,
 4 Just as I am; thy love un - known has bro - ken ev - 'ry



shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
 man - y a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,
 cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise I be - lieve,
 bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,

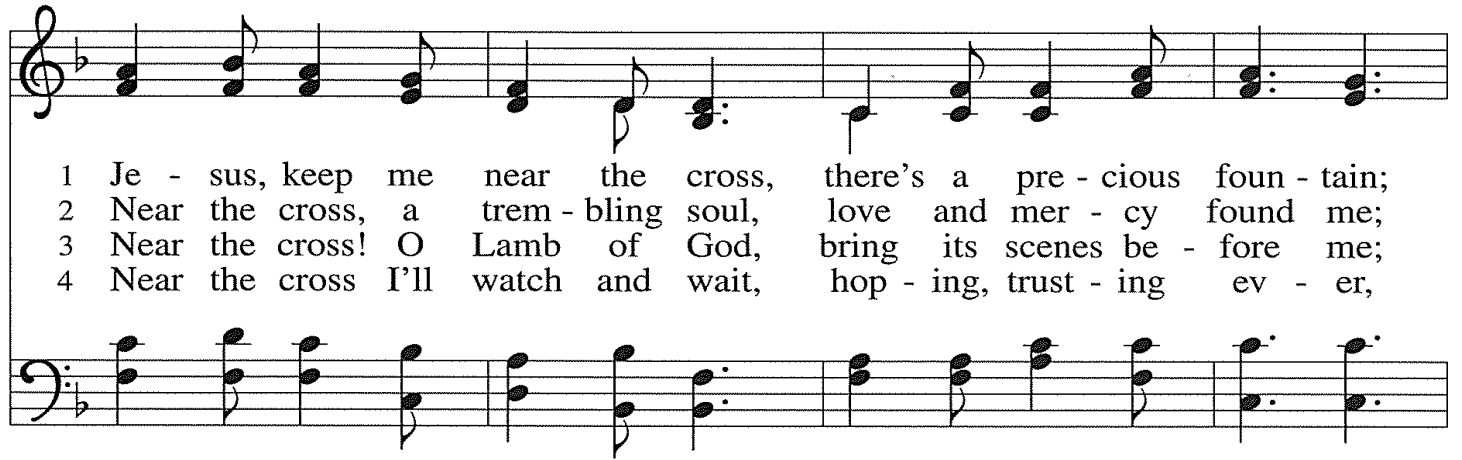


O Lamb of God, I come, I come.



Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

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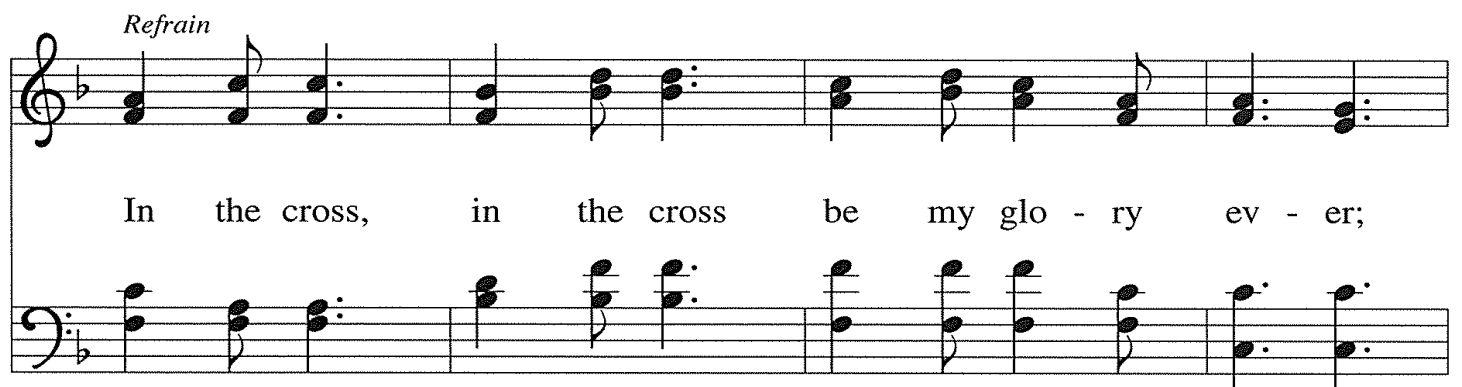


1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;
2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;
3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;
4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,



free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.
there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.
help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.
till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.

Refrain



In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;



till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

Let Us Break Bread Together

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1 Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees;
2 Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees;
3 Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees;

let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees.
let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees.
let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees.

Refrain

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing

sun, O Lord, have mer - cy on me.



1 A - bide with me, fast falls the e - ven - tide.
 2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;
 3 I need thy pres - ence ev - 'ry pass - ing hour;
 4 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
 5 Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes,



The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide.
 earth's joys grow dim, its glo - ries pass a - way;
 what but thy grace can foil the tempt - er's pow'r?
 ills have no weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness.
 shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;



When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,
 change and de - cay in all a - round I see;
 Who like thy - self my guide and stay can be?
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy vic - to - ry?
 heav'n's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain shad - ows flee;



help of the help - less, oh, a - bide with me.
 O thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me.
 Through cloud and sun - shine, oh, a - bide with me.
 I tri - umph still, if thou a - bide with me!
 in life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me.



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Dennis Schmidt, Lutheran Lay Worship Leader

J. Judson Lacko, Lutheran Lay Worship Leader

Matthew Cimino, Organist

Congregational Announcements

Holy Communion

We come to the table today at the invitation of the Lord, receiving the body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Baptized and Confirmed Christians who share this faith and wish to join us at the table are welcome. Young children may be brought forward for a blessing.

The Imposition of Ashes

Throughout the history of God's people, ashes have always been symbolic of God's condemnation of sin, and of human guilt and repentance. Biblically, ashes are also a sign of our mortality. As we are reminded in our funeral liturgy, we shall all return to the earth from which we were made. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust..."

The Flowers on the altar for Ash Wednesday are presented for the glory of God in preparation for the sacrifice of His Only Son, Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Lay Reader is Kimberly Grewe.

Acolytes are Wesley Black and Parker Lambert

Welcome to our Visitors!

The people of this congregation welcome you as you join us in worship on this Ash Wednesday. Please sign the register, located in the narthex. If you have any questions or are interested in hearing about membership, please see the pastor or contact the Church Office.