



ASH Wednesday

**THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY
EPHRATA, PA.**

February 18, 2026

7:00 PM

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The Ash Wednesday Liturgy begins in silence. It is a service of reflection and self-examination. Psalm 51 contains the familiar prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." The ashes, made from the palms of Passion Sunday, are placed on our forehead in the mark of our baptism, a cross. Here our mortality confronts us. Death is a reality, but so is God's promise that not even the grave can separate us from his love. Death has been served notice. It will no longer have the last word.

While marked with the ashes of human mortality, the church hears God's promises of forgiveness and tastes God's mercy in the bread of life and the cup of salvation.

✚THE ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY✚

February 18, 2026

7:00 P.M.

[The liturgy begins in silence. The Pastor will ask the congregation to stand.]

Psalm 51

Be Merciful, O Lord

Refrain

All :



(last time)



Verses

Cantor



1. Have mer-cy on me, God,— in your kind-ness. In your com-
2. For sure-ly I know— my of-fens-es; 7 and my
3. A clean— heart cre-ate in me, O God,— 7 put a
4. Give back to me the joy of your sal-va-tion; 7 and sus-



pas-sion— blot out my of-fense.— O— wash me more and more from my
 sin— is ev-er be-fore me. Against you— a-lone have I
 stead-fast spir-it with-in me. O— cast me not a-way from your
 tain me with a will-ing— spir-it. O— Lord,— o-pen my



guilt— and— cleanse— me from all of my sin. (refrain)
 sinned;— what is e-vil in your sight I have done. (refrain)
 pres-ence, and— take— not your spir-it from me. (refrain)
 lips— and my mouth— shall de-clare your— praise. (refrain)

P. Brothers and sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all his creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we grieve our Father who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn to him and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love - the discipline of Lent - help us to transform our sinful hearts. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and to confess your sins, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

[The congregation will please kneel or be seated]

P. Most Holy and merciful Father:

C. we confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

P. 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.

P. 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 your Holy Spirit.

C. Have mercy on us, Lord.

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

C. We confess to you, Lord.

P. Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

C. We confess to you, Lord.

P. Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

C. We confess to you, Lord.

P. Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

C. We confess to you, Lord.

P. Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

C. We confess to you, Lord.

P. Accept our repentance. Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

C. Accept our repentance, Lord.

P. For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

C. Accept our repentance, Lord.

P. For our waste and the polluting of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

C. Accept our repentance, Lord.

P. Restore us, gracious Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

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

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

[Please be seated. The Imposition of Ashes follows. Come forward by the center aisle. The pastor will place the mark of the ashes on your forehead. After receiving the sign of the ashes, return to your seat by the side aisles.]

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

[When all who desire have received ashes, please kneel]

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. Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore we implore him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C. Amen

[Please stand]

P. The Lord be with you.

C. And also with you.

P. Let us pray.

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 congregation will be seated]

THE FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 58:1-12

¹Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. ²Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. ³“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. ⁴Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. ⁵Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? ⁶Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? ⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? ⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. ⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, ¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. ¹¹The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. ¹²Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

L. This is the Word of the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God.

THE SECOND LESSON: 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10

²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 6:1-10 ¹As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For 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!

³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance,

in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see--we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

L. This is the Word of the Lord. **C. Thanks be to God.**

[Please stand at the conclusion of the lesson]

THE LENTEN SENTENCE

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

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

P. The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the sixth chapter.

C. Glory to you, O Lord. (spoken)

¹Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²"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. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁵"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. ⁶But 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.

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.

P. The Gospel of the Lord. **C. Praise to you, O Christ. (spoken)**

THE SERMON: The Rev. Mark Luscombe

[Please stand for the hymn]

THE HYMN OF THE DAY: ELW #599 LORD JESUS, THINK ON ME

The Prayers

A. Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

(Kneel)

(after each petition, please respond)

A. Hear us, O God.

C. Your mercy is great.

P. Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

C. Amen

[Please be seated]

OFFERTORY: *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us with He Leadeth Me*; arr. Gerald Peterson

[Stand]

THE OFFERTORY: *Create In Me A Clean Heart*



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right



spir-it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres-ence, and



take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the



joy of your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

The Offertory Prayer

P. Merciful God,

C. we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us-ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Preface Dialogue

P. The Lord be with you.

C. And also with you.

P. Lift up your hearts.

C. We lift them to the Lord.

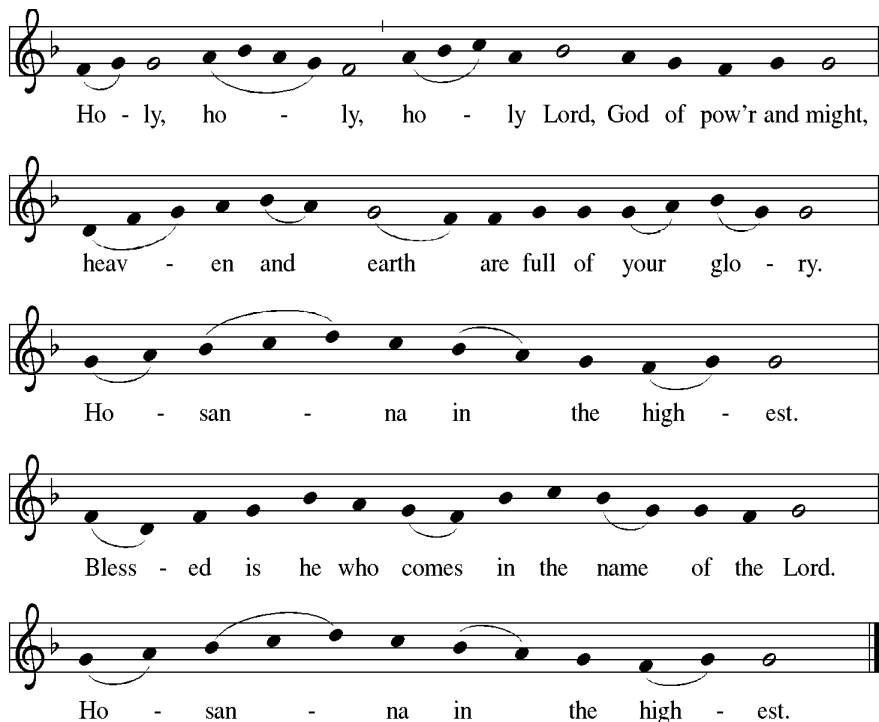
P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Proper Preface for Lent

P. "It is indeed right, and our joy.....join their unending hymn."

Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The Eucharistic Prayer

P. Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age. Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one. Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ. Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations. In the night in which he was handed over, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave

thanks; broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P. O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

C. Come, Holy Spirit.

P. Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

C. Come, Holy Spirit.

P. With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

C. Amen

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

The Fraction

P. This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Happy are they who are called to his supper.

C. Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.

Lamb of God:

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy
on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

The Distribution

[All are invited to come to the table, for either the bread, wine and grape juice or a blessing. If you are visiting, please follow the custom of your home congregation regarding participation of children at the table. We use a glass to receive the wine. The grape juice is pre-poured in the trays. Please join in the hymns provided for the communing of the faithful]

#601 SAVIOR, WHEN IN DUST TO YOU

#793 BE THOU MY VISION

#319 O LORD, THROUGHOUT THESE FORTY DAYS

#592 JUST AS I AM, WITHOUT ONE PLEA

[please stand]

The Blessing of Communicants

P. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C. Amen

The Post Communion Prayer

P. We give you thanks almighty God,

C. that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Benediction

P. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C. Amen

The Dismissal

A. Go in peace. Serve in love.

C. Thanks be to God.

[The liturgy ends in silence. Please remain until the ministers have left the chancel. Leave quietly, so that those who might want to remain for prayer are not disturbed.]

OUR WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY

THE PASTOR

Pastor Mark Luscombe

ASSISTING MINISTER

John Fuehrer

ORGANIST

Debbie Fortna

COUNCIL TEAM

Lisa Garrett, Heather Zimmerman

USHERS

Ron & Carlene Kerschner, David Kerschner, Rob Gilbert

AV

Bob Eberly

ACOLYTE

Judy Williams

ALTAR GUILD

Denise Shirker, Ann & Bob Snader

