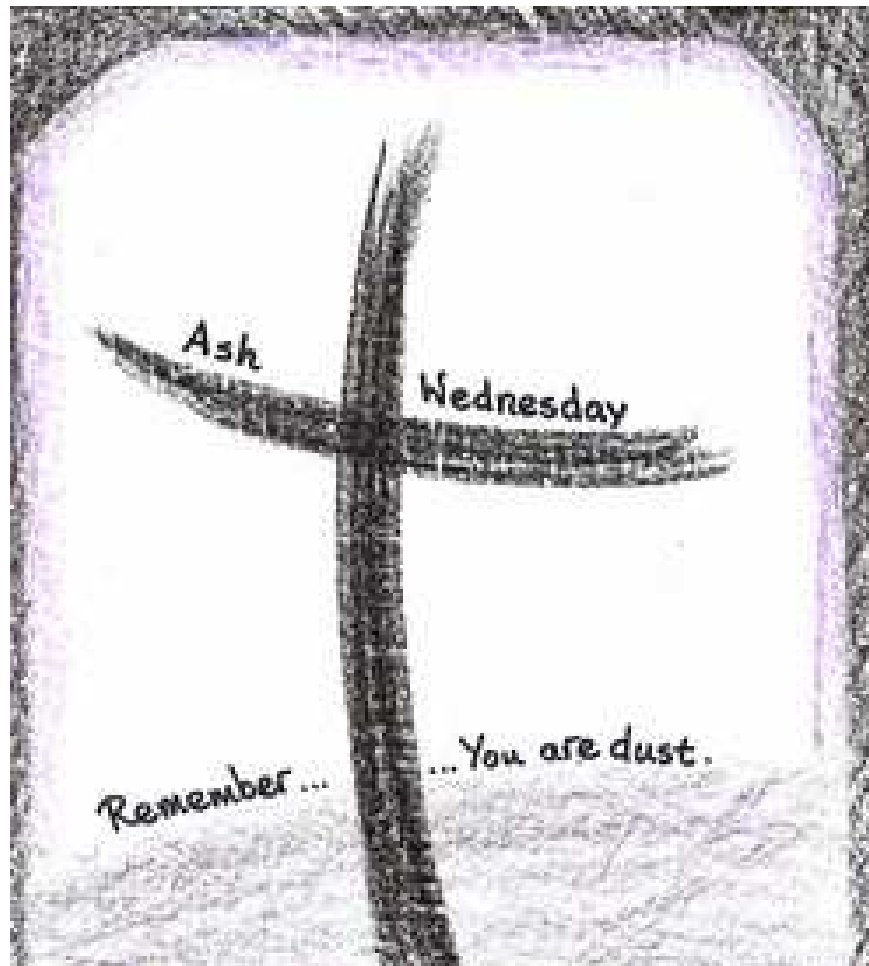




Salem Lutheran Church  
401 S. Lake St. Lake Mills IA 50450

Ash Wednesday  
February 26, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.

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## 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.

*We gather in silence.*

## GATHERING

### 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

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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.

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.**

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.**

We have shut our ears 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.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

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

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

**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. Amen.**

**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.**

*Ministers mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:*  
 Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

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.**

*The presiding minister addresses the assembly.*

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.**

## **GREETING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to  
 serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face  
 our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who  
 lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **WORD**

### **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.*

Word of God, word of life.

**Response to the word: Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 51:1-17**

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. (Ps. 51:1)*

**SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10**

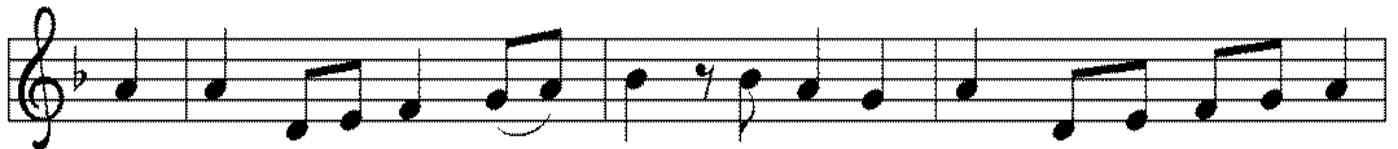
*The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.*

Word of God, word of life.

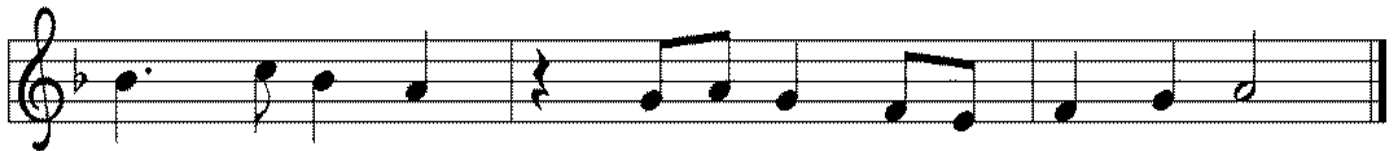
**Response to the Word: Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

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Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

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

The Gospel According to St. Matthew the sixth chapter.

**Response: Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

The gospel of the Lord.

Response to the word: Praise to you, O Christ.

## MEDITATION

HYMN OF THE DAY

Just as I Am, Without One Plea

LBW 296

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- 1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me,  
 2 Just as I am, and wait - ing not to rid my soul of one dark blot,  
 3 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y\_a con - flict, man - y\_a doubt,  
 4 Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind; sight, rich - es, heal - ing of the mind,



and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,  
 to thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
 fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.  
 yea, all I need in thee to find,

- 5 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,  
 wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
 because thy promise I believe,  
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 6 Just as I am; thy love unknown  
 has broken ev'ry barrier down;  
 now to be thine, yea, thine alone,  
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Merciful God, refresh the hearts of your faithful people across all lands and generations. Rescue your church from affliction, hardship, or persecution. Remove all obstacles standing in the way of our witness to your grace, mercy, and everlasting love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Renewing God, bless all wilderness places and all inhabitants of the land. Protect untouched ecosystems, satisfy parched places, and strengthen roots and seeds beneath the soil that await their time to flourish. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Restoring God, rebuild and repair nations ravaged by war or famine (*especially*). Humble the hearts of governments and authorities, that they loose the bonds of injustice and liberate the oppressed. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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Generous God, provide bread for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, and protection for the vulnerable. Listen to the cries of all who are abused, imprisoned, and who suffer due to pain, anxiety, or illness (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Faithful God, renew our practices of devotion and discipleship. Make us generous in giving, steadfast in prayer, and attentive to your grace amid many distractions. Be with those who prepare for baptism and affirmation of baptism (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Redeeming God, you raise us from the dust of death and mark us with the cross of salvation. Strengthen us by the faithfulness of the saints. Restore our joy and lead us by your bountiful grace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## MEAL

### THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God,

our living Water and our merciful Guide,  
together with rivers and seas, wells and springs  
we bless and magnify you.

You led your people Israel through the desert,  
and provided them water from the rock.

We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water,  
who joined us in our desert,  
pouring out his life for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
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.

Remembering, therefore,  
 his life, death, and resurrection,  
 we await your salvation for all this thirsty world.  
 Pour out your Spirit on this holy food  
 and on all the baptized gathered for this feast:  
 wash away our sin,  
 that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.  
 Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
 Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
 in your holy Church,  
 both now and forever. **Amen.**

### **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**

God's love is poured out in Christ for you.  
 Open yourselves to receive it.

### **COMMUNION**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We thank you, living God,  
 for the body and blood of your Son,  
 which sustains us in the wilderness and the garden alike.  
 As Christ has loved us in this feast,  
 so send us to love Christ in our neighbors.  
 In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

## BLESSING

Now is the acceptable time.  
 Now is the day of salvation.  
 Holy God, speaking, spoken, and inspiring,  
 ✝ bless you, unbind you,  
 and send you in love and in peace. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Marked with the cross of Christ, go forth to love and serve the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**