

# ASH WEDNESDAY

## AS WE GATHER

We are reminded on Ash Wednesday that we were destroyed by sin and come to the Lord for cleansing and renewal. We come because Jesus has beckoned us by the Holy Spirit and has called us to repentance. We rely on the great mercy of God and cry out to our King for clean hearts. We respond today, throughout Lent, and for the rest of our lives, by coming to our Savior and receiving His forgiveness and love.

## INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalm 51:1–9*

Pastor: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love;

**People: according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.**

Pastor: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

**People: and cleanse me from my sin!**

Pastor: For I know my transgressions,

**People: and my sin is ever before me.**

Pastor: Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight,

**People: so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment.**

Pastor: Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,

**People: and in sin did my mother conceive me.**

Pastor: Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being,

**People: and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**

Pastor: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

**People: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

Pastor: Let me hear joy and gladness;

**People: let the bones that You have broken rejoice.**

Pastor: Hide Your face from my sins,

**People: and blot out all my iniquities.**

Pastor: On this day of ashes, we reflect on our sin-filled lives and seek God's forgiveness.

*Silence is observed.*

Pastor: Most merciful Father in heaven,

**People: I am a sinner. I have no one to blame. The fault is my own. I deserve to be punished. I am truly sorry for my sins. Yet, for the sake of the loving sacrifice of Your only Son, Jesus Christ, I dare to beg for Your forgiveness. Remove from me the guilt of my sin and wash me that I may be whole again. Help me to be faithful today, tomorrow, and each day, by the power of Your Holy Spirit.**

Pastor: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy on us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

## ADDRESS FOR REMEMBRANCE OF BAPTISM

Pastor: Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From ancient times, the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance borne of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

**READING** *Joel 2:12–19* (“Return to the LORD, your God.”)

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 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. 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; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; 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. 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?’” Then the Lord became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. 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.”

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

### **REMEMBRANCE OF BAPTISM**

*Pastor:* In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther teaches the following about baptism. In parts three and four, he writes as follows: “*Third: How can water do such great things? Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God’s word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.” (Titus 3:5–8) Fourth: What does such baptizing with water indicate? It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever. Where is this written? St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Rom. 6:4)”*”

These are the promises and realities of our baptism. As we live in our baptism, it is a life of repentance and renewal by God’s grace. As we begin the season of Lent, please join me in crossing yourself to remember this precious reality. If you would like to dip your fingers in water to recall your baptism, you are more than welcome to.

### **COLLECT OF THE DAY**

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may, like David before us, receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

## **OLD TESTAMENT READING** *Exodus 12:1-13*

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## **EPISTLE 2** *Corinthians 5:20b–6:10* (Paul invites us to be reconciled to God.)

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

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## **HOLY GOSPEL** *Matthew 26:1-5*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

**People: Glory to You, O Lord.**

When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.” Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to You, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

## **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**LORD'S PRAYER** *Matthew 6:9–13*

**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.**

## **BENEDICTION**

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

**People: Amen.**

**HYMN** "O Lord, throughout These Forty Days" *LSB 418*

1 O Lord, throughout these forty days

You prayed and kept the fast;

Inspire repentance for our sin,

And free us from our past.

2 You strove with Satan, and You won;

Your faithfulness endured;

Lend us Your nerve, Your skill and trust

In God's eternal Word.

3 Though parched and hungry, yet You prayed

And fixed Your mind above;

So teach us to deny ourselves,

Since we have known God's love.

4 Be with us through this season, Lord,

And all our earthly days,

That when the final Easter dawns,

We join in heaven's praise.

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