

*Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.*

- Joel 2:13

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Ash Wednesday – March 5, 2014

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*We welcome you to St. John Lutheran Church. We are delighted to have you worship with us. Should you have no permanent church-home in this community, why not consider making this one your own? Please sign the guest book as you leave worship today or the attendance pad in the pew. You are most welcome here at St. John! Most elements of our service can be found in the bulletin, everything else is in the hymnal. Page refers to the numbered pages towards the front of the hymnal, hymns are bold and towards the back. Please rise when there is an *, congregational responses are in bold, and underlined elements of the service are found in the hymnal.*

HOLY COMMUNION AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Ash Wednesday – March 5, 2014

Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.

***GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

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.

Amen.

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 —

²a 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.

¹²Yet even now, says the LORD,

 return to me with all your heart,

 with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³rend 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.

¹⁴Who 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?
¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 sanctify a fast;
 call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶gather 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.
¹⁷Between 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?'"

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 51:1–17

1. Have mer - cy on us, liv - ing Lord, re - mem - ber not our sin.
 2. We're born in - to a guilt - y world and sin - ful in our ways.
 3. Your Spir - it place with - in our hearts that we may teach your ways,

Ac - cord - ing to your stead - fast love come cleanse us deep with - in.
 Lord, teach us wis - dom in our hearts and lead us all our days.
 and all the peo - ple of the earth shall learn to sing your praise.

Our sin and guilt are heav - y, Lord, and e - vil in your sight.
 So come and pu - ri - fy our lives, our hearts with love re - deem.
 You are not pleased with sac - ri - fice, it brings you no de - light.

A - gainst you on - ly have we sinned, your judg - ment, Lord, is right.
 Re - store us to your life - filled ways. Come, Lord, and make us clean.
 A hum - ble spir - it giv'n in love is pleas - ing in your sight.

Text: Psalm 51; para. Fred R. Anderson

Music: North American traditional

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RESIGNATION
 CMD

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.

^{5:20b}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.

^{6:10}As 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.

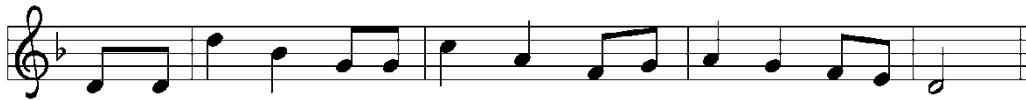
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



We are turn - ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer - ci - ful and kind -



slow to an - ger, rich in bless - ing, and with love to us in - clined.

*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.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

"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.

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.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY: *Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church* (ELW 321)**

***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 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.

***IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

Those who wish may come forward to receive the ashes. Ministers mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:

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

CONGREGATIONAL SONG: Savior, When in Dust to You (ELW 601)

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

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.

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.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Returning to the Lord with all our heart, let us pray for the whole people of God, the earth, and all who cry out for healing.

For Christians around the world assembled at the beginning of the Lenten fast; for greater understanding among the religions of the world; and for faith to recognize Christ as life's true treasure. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For faithful leaders who call us to compassion for the poor; and for all facing affliction, imprisonment, unemployment, hunger, and sleepless nights. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For the well-being of all creation; for earth's ecosystems; for plants and animals; and for rocks and soil. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For the health of our communities; for an end to injustice, oppression, poverty, and homelessness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For this assembly; for a deeper awareness of our mortality; and for all who live with illness, addiction, loss, or anxiety.. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Reconcile us to one another and to you, gracious God, until we join all your holy ones in life everlasting. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Hear us according to your steadfast love, O God, and in your great compassion bring us to resurrection and rebirth in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OFFERING

*OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God our provider,
you have not fed us with bread alone,
but with words of grace and life.

Bless us and these your gifts,
which we receive from your bounty,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

***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**

All who are hungry, come and eat the bread of life.
All who are thirsty, come and drink the cup of salvation.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**
The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine of communion. Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. All are invited forward for communion or a blessing. The inner ring of individual cups has grape juice.

COMMUNION SONG: *Lamb of God*



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, in this holy meal
you have embraced us and gathered us into your arms of compassion and protection.
Release us now to go on our way in these forty days,
ready to see our work as prayer,
ready to fast from complacency,
and ready to share with those in need;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

*BLESSING

May you go from this place having acknowledged yourselves
as sinners in word and deed and in what has been left undone.

Amen.

May you know always that God's response to our repentance
is never less than grace-filled and loving forgiveness.

Amen.

May you be given the grace to forgive others as God has forgiven you.

Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, + the Son,
and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

Amen.

*SENDING SONG: *O Lord, throughout These Forty Days (ELW 319)*

*DISMISSAL

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one
evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

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