



Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021

All are welcome to join us for an online worship service at 7 pm, on the Eden Lutheran Church Facebook Page

You may prepare for this service of prayer at home by finding a place to pray and lighting a candle there. Included in the Ashes at Home kits ashes/soil to use in this service. You may add a couple of drops of olive oil at a time to moisten the ash mixture, if you like. You may also use ash, soil or water from your home.

As we sign the cross on ourselves, think of this: all ash, soil and water signify death and new life — the ashes from the palm branches of last year, common soil since human beings in Genesis 2 are earth creatures made of dust, and water which in baptism joins us to the death of Christ.

We begin:

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.

Amen.

A brief silence is kept before the 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.

Then the readings for the day are read.

First Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

¹Blow 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 the LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast
love,
and relents from punishing.

¹⁴Who knows whether the LORD will not turn and relent, and leave behind a blessing, 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?'"

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

The Psalm is read in response to the First Reading.

Psalm 51:1-17

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
²Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.
³For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.
⁴Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.
⁵Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.
⁶Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.
⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.
⁸Let me hear joy and gladness;

that the body you have broken may rejoice.
⁹Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.
¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
¹¹Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
¹³Let me teach your ways to offenders, and sinners shall be restored to you.
¹⁴Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.
¹⁵O LORD, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
¹⁶For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You are not pleased with burnt offering.
¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

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

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“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.

Reflection

Having read these readings, we think on this:

On Ash Wednesday, with a day of fasting and repentance, we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter. Marking our foreheads with dust or water, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the mark traces the life-giving cross that was indelibly placed 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.

A Confession of Sin

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

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.

Signing with ashes, soil, or water

Those living in your household may sign each other on the forehead, while those living alone may mark their own forehead.

When ashes or soil are used, the forehead of each person may be signed with a cross while these words are said:

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

If water is used, these words are said:

Remember that you were buried with Christ in baptism. Repent and believe in the gospel.

After the signing, we conclude with these words:

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.

Prayers of Intercession

On this Ash Wednesday, we pray for the church and for all in need. Let these bids encourage our spoken or silent prayers.

Let us pray for the church throughout the world ...

Let us pray for our congregation ...

Let us pray for everyone who is preparing for baptism at Easter ...

Let us pray for the health of plants and animals ...

Let us pray for all who care for the earth ...

Let us pray for peace throughout the world ...

Let us pray for an increase of justice in our land ...

Let us pray for a spirit of concord throughout our society ...

Let us pray for the hungry, the homeless, the unemployed ...

Let us pray for the end of this pandemic ...

Let us pray for all who are sick or suffering ...

Let us pray for all who today will die ...

Let us pray for the desires of our hearts ...

Let us thank God for all who have gone before us in the faith ...

Into your hands, merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

We conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life 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.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.**

Then we speak the Blessing:

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

Amen.

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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