

Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent - a period of 40 days of prayer for God to help us move to acts of prayer, fasting, and charity, and restore in us a clean heart. It is a time for the church, and all the world, to remember that we belong to one another and to God. Tonight, we embody this through the ritual of receiving ash on our foreheads. The ash reminds us of our sin and mortality, that we are dust and to dust we shall return. The form of the cross proclaims to us that Christ is the source of forgiveness and new life.

In Luke 9:51-62, a village of Samaritans refuses to receive Jesus, and his disciples suggest impulsive action. Somewhere between good intentions and impulsive action lies discipleship. On Ash Wednesday, we make a commitment to align our intentions with our actions.

Prelude: "Hymn of Heaven," by Phil Wickham
Sung by the Faith Singers

PSALM 23 Reader: Sharon Woodworth

¹The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;

³ he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil,

for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing that 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.

JOHN 10:1-18

¹“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of

my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

MEDITATION

“The Good Shepherd”

“Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us” ELW 789

- 1 **Savior, like a shepherd lead us; much we need your tender care.
In your pleasant pastures feed us, for our use your fold prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us; we are yours.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us; we are yours.**
- 2 **We are yours; in love befriend us, be the guardian of our way;
keep your flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear us children when we pray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear us children when we pray.**
- 3 **You have promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be;
you have mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to you.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to you.**
- 4 **Early let us seek your favor, early let us do your will;
blessed Lord and only Savior, with your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.**

INVITATION TO LENT

P: 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.

A LITANY OF CONFESSION

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination)

P: Most holy and merciful heavenly 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. We have sinned both 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, O God.

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

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: We confess our envy of those who have things we do not, and our excessive love of material goods and earthly comforts.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: We confess our lapses into blindness to human need and suffering, and into indifference to injustice and cruelty.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: We confess our wastefulness and pollution of your creation.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

“Shepherd Me, O God”

Refrain
All

Shep- herd me, O God, be - yond my wants, be - yond my fears, from
death in - to life. life.

1. God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want,
I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love,
I walk by the quiet waters of peace. **Refrain**
2. Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul,
you lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth,
My spirit shall sing the music of your name. **Refrain**
3. Though I should wander the valley of death,
I fear no evil, for you are at my side,
Your rod and your staff, my comfort and my hope. **Refrain**
4. You have set me a banquet of love in the face of hatred,
crowning me with love beyond my pow’r to hold. **Refrain**
5. Surely your kindness and mercy follow me all the days of my life;
I will dwell in the house of my God forevermore. **Refrain**

P: 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. We pray this through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **C: Amen.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

As we sing, “Sign Us with Ashes,” you are invited forward to receive ashes on your forehead. Ash is a symbol of repentance and our mortality. It traces a cross on our foreheads just as a cross of oil was placed there at our Baptism.

This cross of ash proclaims that, by our repentance, new life is granted through Christ’s saving death on the cross. All who desire to receive ashes may come forward down the center aisle and return by way of the side aisles.

SONG: “Sign Us with Ashes”

Verses will be sung by a soloist; congregation joins on Refrain

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major, 4/4 time. The first staff is marked 'All' and contains the melody for the first line of lyrics: 'Sign us with ash-es, mer-ci-ful God, chil-dren of dust, as to dust we re-turn.' The second staff is marked '5' at the beginning and 'To Verses' at the end, containing the melody for the second line of lyrics: 'Sign us with ash-es, mer-ci-ful God; mark us and make us your own.' The lyrics are written below the notes.

Verse 1: Surely, you alone can save us. You pay our price with precious blood.
Reaching through your great compassion you lift up your people with love. **Refrain**

Verse 2: Surely, you alone uphold us. You give us strength for all our needs.
Shielding with a father’s favor, you bless us with pardon and peace. **Refrain**

Verse 3: Surely, you alone can heal us. Yours is the will to make us whole.
Soothing with a mother’s kindness, the contrite of heart, you console. **Refrain**

Verse 4: Surely, you alone can free us. You break the bonds of guilt and sin.
Bracing, till we walk uprightly, you bolster our hope once again. **Refrain**

Verse 5: Surely, you alone refine us. You give us grace for lives made new,
forging, through your fire and radiance, a sacrifice worthy for you. **Refrain**

Verse 6: Surely, you alone redeem us. You fill our dust with holy breath.
Bursting from the grave in glory, you rise from the ashes of death. **Refrain**

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,

C: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

P: Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

C: Amen.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

P: As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Refrain

As of - ten as you eat this bread and

4
drink this cup You pro - claim the Lord's death un - til he comes.

P: On the night of his betrayal, ... This do so you remember me.” *Refrain*
After supper, ... This do so you remember me.” *Refrain*

C: 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.

DURING DISTRIBUTION:

“The King of Love My Shepherd Is” ELW 502

- 1 The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his and he is mine forever.**
- 2 Where streams of living water flow, my ransomed soul he leadeth
and, where the verdant pastures grow, with food celestial feedeth.**

- 3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid, and home, rejoicing, brought me.
- 4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear Lord, beside me,
thy rod and staff my comfort still; thy cross before to guide me.
- 5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight; thine unction grace bestoweth;
and, oh, what transport of delight from thy pure chalice floweth!
- 6 And so, through all the length of days, thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever.

“God Loved the World” ELW 323

1. **God loved the world so that he gave his only Son the lost to save,
That all who would in him believe should everlasting life receive.**
2. **Christ Jesus is the ground of faith, who was made flesh and suffered death;
All who confide in Christ alone are built on this chief cornerstone.**
3. **If you are ill, if death draws near, this truth your troubled heart can cheer;
Christ Jesus rescues us from death; that is the firmest ground of faith.**
4. **Be of good cheer, for God’s own Son forgives all sins that you have done,
And justified by Jesus’ blood, your baptism grants the highest good.**
5. **All glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity, be praise now and eternally!**

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

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, 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.

C: Amen.

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

C: Amen.

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

- 1 **Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,
the path through noise and silence, the way of give and take.
The trail is found in desert and winds the mountain round,
then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.**
- 2 **Bless sojourners and pilgrims who share this winding way;
your hope burns through the terrors, your love sustains the day.
We yearn for holy freedom while often we are bound;
together we are seeking the road where faith is found.**
- 3 **Divine eternal lover, you meet us on the road.
We wait for land of promise where milk and honey flow,
but waiting not for places, you meet us all around.
Our covenant is written on roads, as faith is found.**



Adam Dichsen, Pastor
Sharon Woodworth, Reader
Jean Welch, Pianist

Ken Devlin, Communion Assistant
Pat Glyshaw, Usher
Kris Roth, Chancel Committee
Lynette Hamilton, Greeter

Ash
Wednesday 

Our Lenten tradition continues with Wednesday night meals and worship, and, like last year, will be a provided Outreach meal with a free-will offering. Groups are invited to sign up for a Wednesday to provide the meal. The group can select a charity to receive the funds, and all of the offering will go towards that ministry. Sign up your group and charity at the counter outside the Total Ministry Center. Join us for these wonderful outreach meals at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, and all are invited to chip in and help with clean up in the kitchen. Worship will start at 7:00 to make time for all to be ready after the meal.



Please join us for Sunday morning worship at 9:30 a.m.

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