



ASH WEDNESDAY

Calvary Lutheran Church
Cranford, NJ

February 14, 2024

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Calvary Lutheran Church

is a member congregation of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

Serving Cranford and the surrounding area for more than 90 years

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Calvary Lutheran
Cranford, New Jersey



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

ASH WEDNESDAY

worship

February 14, 2024
Service of Holy Eucharist

INTRODUCTION

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.

PRELUDE

ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY

WORDS OF WELCOME

PSALM 51:1-17

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

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.

²**Wash 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.

⁴**Against 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. R**

⁵Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my | mother's womb.

⁶**Indeed, 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.

⁸**Let me hear | joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken | may rejoice. R**

⁹Hide your face | from my sins,
and blot out | all my wickedness.

¹⁰**Create 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.

¹²**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. R**

¹³Let me teach your ways | to offenders,
and sinners shall be restored to you.

¹⁴**Rescue 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.

¹⁶**For 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. R

**“Create
in me a
clean heart,
O God,
and put a
new and right
spirit
within me.”**
Psalm 51:10

EXHORTATION

P Brothers and sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of his creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn to him and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love--the discipline of Lent--help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

The congregation may kneel in silence for reflection and self-examination precedes the confession.

CONFESSION

P Most holy and merciful 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; 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, Lord.

P We have been deaf 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.

C Have mercy on us, Lord.

P We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

C We confess to you, Lord.

P Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

C We confess to you, Lord.

- [P]** Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,
- [C] We confess to you, Lord.**
- [P]** Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,
- [C] We confess to you, Lord.**
- [P]** Our negligence in prayer and worship, our failure to commend the faith that is in us,
- [C] We confess to you, Lord.**
- [P]** Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,
- [C] Accept our repentance, Lord.**
- [P]** For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,
- [C] Accept our repentance, Lord.**
- [P]** For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,
- [C] Accept our repentance, Lord.**
- [P]** Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.
- [C] Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen**



IMPOSITION OF ASHES

When ashes are to be imposed, those who desire to receive ashes come forward and kneel before the altar. The ministers apply ashes to the forehead of each person with the words:

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

After all who desire ashes have received them, the minister leads the congregation in the conclusion of the confession.

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, our Lord,

C **Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

P Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore we implore him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

HYMN

“Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive”

ELW #605

SALUTATION AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.

C **Amen**

↓ FIRST READING: JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17

Ⓐ A READING FROM JOEL THE 2nd CHAPTER

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 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

↓ SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

Ⓐ A READING FROM 2 CORINTHIANS THE 5th CHAPTER

^{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.

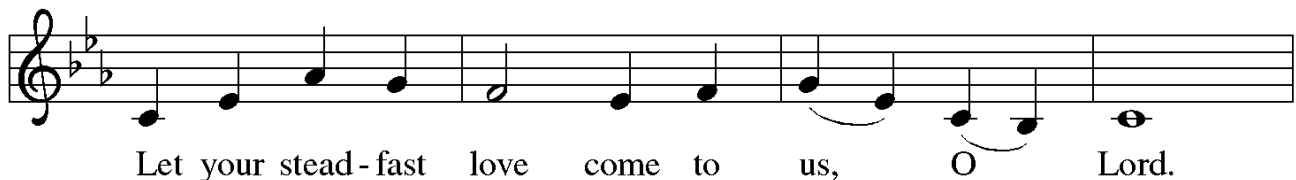
^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

“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.

↑ GOSPEL VERSE

ELW Setting One



GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

P THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW THE 6th CHAPTER

C 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.” 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.

⁷ So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The 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. ¹² The 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. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I 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. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸ No 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.”

P THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

MEDITATION

THE PRAYERS

We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

A We are often stubborn and willfully ignorant of your guidance. Steer us back to your fold and reassure us of your unconditional love. Good Shepherd,

C Hear our prayer.

A You love all that you have made, O Lord, and long for us to tend it as carefully as you would yourself. Endow us with your careful, gentle spirit and return us to the work of stewardship with which you first entrusted us at creation. Good Shepherd,

C Hear our prayer.

A Lord, nothing can separate us from you. Not predators, nor dangers, nor death itself. As we remember our own mortality this day, we do so in the sure promise of your ultimate resurrection. Good Shepherd,

C Hear our prayer.

A You restore our souls and anoint our heads with healing oil. Bring all those who long for relief into your secure pasture, and into the wholeness of your family. Good Shepherd,

C Hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P Blessed are those who dwell in your house forever, O God. Draw all your saints together, both living and resurrected, into one great fold, where we hear and know your voice, and where no threat of danger may harm us. Good Shepherd,

C Hear our prayer.

P Gather our prayers as you gather your beloved sheep, O Lord, for we entrust them, as we do ourselves, to your eternal care. Amen.

C Hear our prayer.

↓ **OFFERING**

OFFERTORY HYMN “*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*” *ELW #631*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A 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.

C Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is 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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Come to the table prepared for you. Taste the overflowing grace of God.

↓ DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

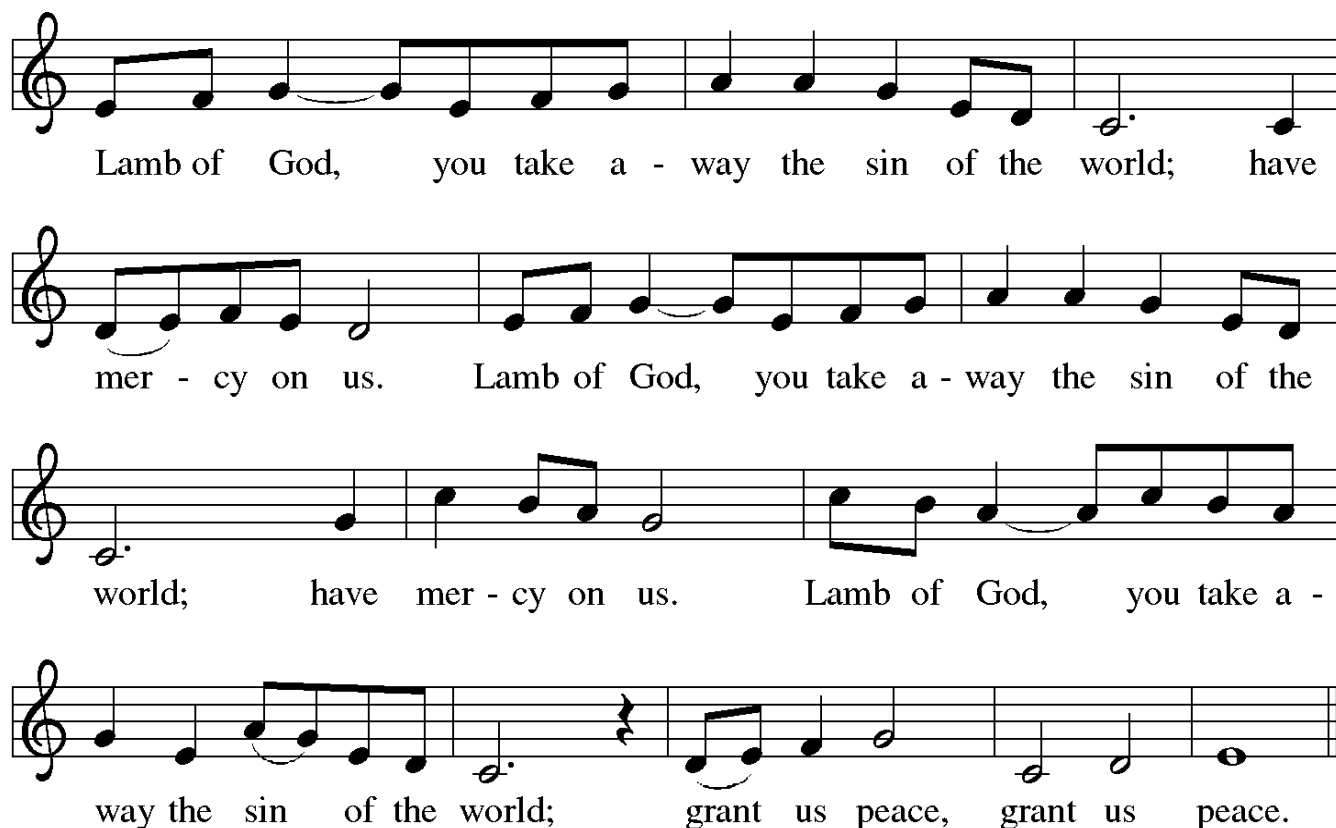
In Christian fellowship you are welcome to the Lord's table. Come forward by the center aisle to receive the host and wine. (The pulpit side of the congregation communes first). If you prefer grape juice, the cups in the center of the tray are filled with juice. Wine is on the outside. Return to your pew using the side aisle after you have communed.



Children are encouraged to come forward to receive a blessing.

AGNUS DEI

ELW Setting One



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A God of mercy, we give you thanks for seating us at your table and serving us with the food of eternal life. We who once were dead are now living members of your Son, awakened by the breathing of your Spirit. Send us out to awaken others to the mystery of your love, which is revealed to all the world in the one who came to give himself away, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

BLESSING

P God the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth and forevermore.

C Amen.

SENDING HYMN

“Abide with Me”

ELW #629

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Remember the poor.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE



