



Welcome to Faith Lutheran

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Pastor Ellen Schoepf
prellen@faithlutheranokemos.org
4515 Dobie Road
Okemos, MI 48864

Ashes in Public?

In today's gospel Jesus cautions us against public acts of piety—on the one day of the year we leave worship with a visible smudge on our foreheads, reminding everyone we see that we have been to church. What are you supposed to do, wipe the ashes off before stepping outside? Do you leave them on only to have the cashier at the grocery store say, "You've got something on your forehead"?

Of course Jesus does not tell us to refrain from all acts of public piety. What Jesus seems concerned with is the *why*, not the *what*. Why do you pray in public? Why do you give alms? Why do you fast? If appearing faithful is a way to build yourself up before others, then it is not faithfulness but hypocrisy. On the other hand, if praying over a meal in a restaurant is something you do because praying at meals is part of your faith, by all means bow your head and pray.

As the season of Lent begins each year, God's people are invited to take on three great disciplines: prayer, fasting, and alms-giving. You hear the invitation to prayer, fasting, and alms-giving in the reading from Joel. Jesus' words in the gospel remind us that our acts of faithfulness always come as a response to God's gifts. Remembering this gives a note of humility to all we do. Piety is not something to brag about. Piety is not something to be proud of. Piety is but acknowledgment of the one who first gave us everything.

Finally, Paul makes it clear, as if there were ever any question: we only become righteous in Jesus. We know grace only because Jesus becomes our sin. This is the grounding for everything we do throughout the holy days of Lent.

INTRODUCTION

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

GATHERING

GREETING

The Lord be with you. **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**

WORD

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.

A reading from Joel.

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.**

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.

A reading from second Corinthians.

Chapter 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.

Chapter 6

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



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

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 St. 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.

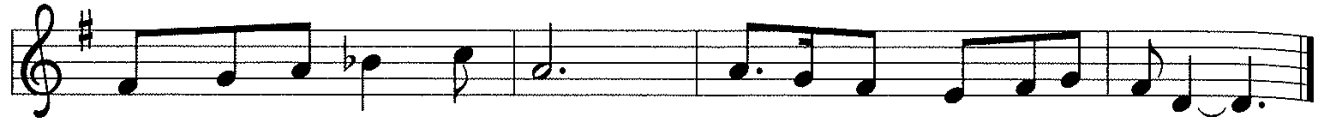
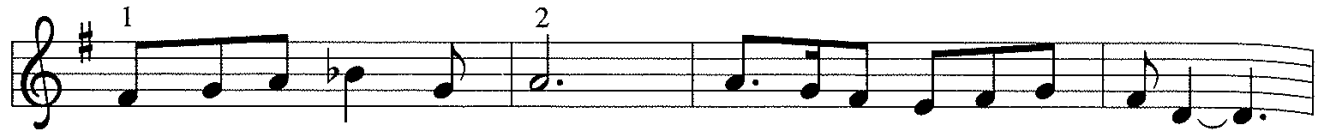
The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

918

Now Is the Time of Grace



Verses – Leader

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 This is the fast that God would choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to let the captives go free,
and to break the yoke of oppression. | 2 Sharing your bread with the hungry
and welcoming homeless in,
offering hope and offering help,
this is what God requires. <i>Refrain</i> |
|---|---|

Refrain

- 3 Then shall your light break forth as dawn,
and healing shall come to you quickly;
then you shall call and God shall answer,
God's love shall go before you. *Refrain*

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, based on 2 Corinthians 6:2 and Isaiah 58:6-9
Music: Marty Haugen
Text and music © 2009 Augsburg Fortress

TIME OF GRACE
Irregular

Music for the optional leader verses is in the Accompaniment Edition. The refrain may be sung in unison or in two-part canon.

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

Using the ashes you received in the mail, mark the foreheads of each person in your family as you say the following words:

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

919

Remember That You Are Dust

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a first ending bracket labeled '1*' and a second ending bracket labeled '2'. The lyrics are: 'Re - mem - ber that you are dust, and to dust you shall re - turn.' The melody is simple and suitable for a congregational hymn.

* *May be sung in canon*

Text: Ash Wednesday liturgy
Music: Mark Mummert, b. 1965
Music © 2009 Augsburg Fortress

CROSS OF ASHES
77

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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

Hearing the call to return to the Lord, let us join the whole people of God in prayer for all who cry out in pain and in hope.

Merciful Lord, where people ask, “Where is their God?” send your church. Equip us with compassion and boldness to listen to our neighbors. Make our speech and actions witness to your eternal presence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Merciful Lord, where the soil cries for rain, send relief. Restore depleted water tables and cleanse waterways around the world. Teach us to treasure all creation as you do. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Merciful Lord, where terror shouts, send peace. Deliver all from the threat of bloodshed and the trauma of violence. Reconcile nation with nation and neighbor with neighbor. Wash us in your peace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Merciful Lord, where bellies rumble, send food. Bless Lutheran World Relief and all who work to ensure no one goes to bed hungry. Provide for all who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Merciful Lord, when hearts and minds call for you, send faithful disciples. Walk with all who prepare for baptism. Uphold them with a community rooted in your word and nourished by bread and wine. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Merciful Lord, where death stings, send comfort. Be with all who mourn. In the midst of their sorrow and pain, sustain their trust in the eternal life you give. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

To you, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your boundless mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

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

Santo, santo, santo

San - to, san - to, san - to, mi co - ra - zón te a - do - ra.
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, my heart, my heart a - dores you.

The first system of musical notation consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The bass staff contains a harmonic accompaniment of chords and single notes.

Mi co - ra - zón te sa - be de - cir: San - to e - res Se - ñor.
My heart is glad to say the words: You are ho - ly, God.

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. It concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Text: Argentine traditional
Music: ARGENTINE SANTO, Argentine traditional

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

All who thirst, all who hunger, come and be filled with the goodness of God.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

Extracted from service on 3/10/2019

"Breathe on Me, Breath of God"

(arr. Barry)

Joyful Noise Choir, handchimes

Gwynne Kadrofske, flute

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

Amen

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

O God, we thank you for gathering and feeding us as a mother hen embraces her young. 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

SENDING

BLESSING

The blessing of God Almighty,
the wisdom and power of + Christ Jesus,
and the light of the Holy Spirit be among
you and remain with you always.

Amen

SENDING HYMN

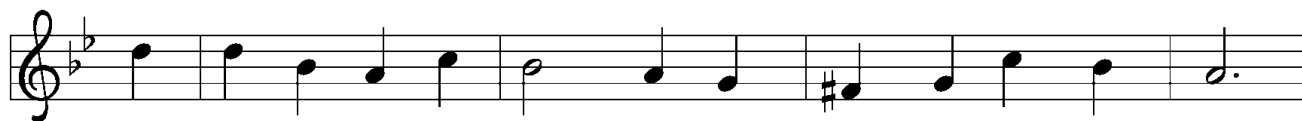
Bless Now, O God, the Journey



1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,
2 Bless so - journ-ers and pil - grims who share this wind-ing way;
3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.



the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.
your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus-tains the day.
We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon-ey flow,



The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun-tain round,
We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;
but wait-ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.



then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.
to - geth-er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.
Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: LLANGLOFFAN, Welsh tune, 19th cent.

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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.

POST-SERVICE MUSIC

“All Things of Dust to Dust Return”

arr. Howard McKinney

“Lord, mark up on my brow this sign: a stark and barren cross
reminding me that though divine you know my pain and loss,
and at the touch of dust and ash awake my heart to view
how death itself is but a flash and dies away in you.”