

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Ash Wednesday



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WELCOME TO ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

WE WELCOME OUR GUESTS and pray that all who are with us today are blessed by the message of God's Word that we have in our lessons and hymns, and by an encouraging and warm welcome. Our worship service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ - forgiveness and peace, help and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven. The notes below may be helpful for your worship and time with us today. If you have questions, please ask! We are blessed to have you with us!

Our Communion Practice

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church, celebrating the Lord's Supper only with those who are close to us in faith and teaching. In this sacrament we are also giving public confession of our doctrinal unity and fellowship. We invite visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us in the sacrament. We ask our fellow Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice, and to make an appointment to speak with the pastor if you have any questions.

We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us for worship. Children's worship bulletins and "church bags" (with paper, colors, Bible story books) are available from an usher. Baby noises can be beautiful to our Savior who said, "Let the little children come to me." If children are crying loudly, our nursery and Gathering Area (back of the church) are audio-equipped and available for you and your young children. After the children regain their composure, come back so we can all worship together.

We Care about Your Special Needs

Large Print Service Folders are available from an usher. *Hearing Assistance* for those with hearing aids is provided through our *Hearing Loop*. More information is available from an usher. A *wheelchair lift* is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.

Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.

Our Vision of Ministry

We will be a vibrant family of Christians growing in faith, love, and action. We will strive to be known for truth (God's Word) and love (Jesus' great gift) and to offer a worship and congregation life that not only connects us with Christ, but with each other and our community.

As part of our ministry ... St. John offers an excellent preschool and k-8 program.

St. John is a ministry partner with ... Shoreland Lutheran High School www.slhs.us Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) - www.wels.net.

Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... We observe Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday worship does not look, sound, or feel like any other service. It is a service that includes unusual, and perhaps, uncomfortable elements: the pastor's black robe, the somber and serious tunes, the look all-around of dirty ash on a rough banner, the moments of silence for reflection, and a message that echoes God's curse placed not only on Adam and Eve, but on us as well: "For dust you are and to dust you will return." With this on our hearts, we are called to heed King David's plea: "Put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption." God bless your worship this evening.



Hands of Repentance (Tax Collector)

Hands of Betrayal (Judas)

Hands of Misguided Zeal (Peter)

Hands of Hypocrisy (Caiaphas)

Hands of Brutality (Soldiers)

Hands of Self-Preservation (Pilate)

OPENING HYMN

"Jesus, I Will Ponder Now"

Hymn 98

(St. 1-3)

Jesus, I will ponder now On your holy passion;
With your Spirit me endow For such meditation.
Grant that I in love and faith May the image cherish
Of your suff'ring, pain, and death That I may not perish.

Make me see your great distress, Anguish, and affliction,
Bonds and stripes and wretchedness And your crucifixion;
Make me see how scourge and rod, Spear and nails did wound you,
How for them you died, O God, Who with thorns had crowned you.

Yet, O Lord, not thus alone Make me see your passion,
But its cause to me make known And its termination.
Ah! I also and my sin Wrought your deep affliction;
This indeed the cause has been Of your crucifixion.

INSTRUCTION FOR THE BEGINNING OF LENT

P: Brothers and sisters in Christ, God created us to know joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. By our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn to him and live. Therefore, God in his mercy has sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take our place under the law, to suffer for us, and to die the death we deserve. God made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

During the forty days of Lent we fix our eyes on Jesus, as the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

I invite you, therefore, to confess your sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit yourselves to this struggle. Isaiah leads us to see and confess our wrong against the Lord. He shows us we can confess and repent with confidence and hope: the Lord has worked salvation. He has come and will come again as Redeemer for his people.

For our offenses are many in your sight,
and our sins testify against us.
Our offenses are ever with us,
and we acknowledge our iniquities:

rebellion and treachery against the LORD,
turning our backs on our God,
fomenting oppression and revolt,
uttering lies our hearts have conceived.

So justice is driven back,
and righteousness stands at a distance;
truth has stumbled in the streets,
honesty cannot enter.

Truth is nowhere to be found,
and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.
The LORD looked and was displeased
that there was no justice.

He saw that there was no one,
he was appalled that there was no one to intervene;
so his own arm worked salvation for him,
and his own righteousness sustained him.

He put on righteousness as his breastplate,
and the helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on the garments of vengeance
and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

According to what they have done,
so will he repay
wrath to his enemies
and retribution to his foes;
he will repay the islands their due.

From the west, men will fear the name of the LORD,
and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory.
For he will come like a pent-up flood
that the breath of the LORD drives along.

“The Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,”
declares the LORD.

CHOIR

“Father Forgive Us”
By Matthew Manthe

Father, forgive us for all we have done.
Daily we stumble; from you we do run.
Often to try our own heaven to earn,
Forgive us, Lord; to your Son help us turn.

There on the cross we see God’s only Son.
Payment for sin; once for all and for one.
“Father, forgive them,” he prays on the tree.
Showing his love and his mercy so free.

Look to the cross; find forgiveness and love,
Pardon from God in his heaven above.
Father, forgive us for all we have done.
Father, forgive for the sake of your Son.
Father, forgive for the sake of your Son.

LESSON

Luke 18:9-14

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

P: Let us be silent. Let us be still. Let us pause now for a time of reflection and self-examination.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

CONFESSION OF SINS

P: Most holy and merciful Father,

C: **we confess to you and to one another that we have sinned by our own fault, by our own grievous 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 the 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, O Lord.**

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

C: **we confess to you, O Lord.**

P: Our anger when our selfish aims are denied,
and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves

C: **we confess to you, O Lord.**

P: Our love of worldly goods and comforts,
and our dishonesty in daily life and work

C: **we confess to you, O Lord.**

P: Our negligence in worship and prayer,
and our failure to show the faith that is in us

C: **we confess to you, O Lord.**

P: Forgive us, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

C: **forgive us, O Lord.**

P: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward others, and for our prejudice and contempt for those who differ from us,

C: **forgive us, O Lord.**

P: For what we think or say or do that is at variance with your will,

C: **forgive us, O Lord.**

P: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

C: **Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great.**

ABSOLUTION

P: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live.

In love he has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith, and at the last, be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

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 suffering of your Son, O Lord,

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

HYMN

"Jesus, I Will Ponder Now"

Hymn 98

(St. 4-6)

If my sins give me alarm And my conscience grieve me,
Let your cross my fear disarm; Peace of conscience give me.
Help me see forgiveness won By your holy passion.
If for me he slays his Son, God must have compassion!

Grant that I your passion view With repentant grieving.
Let me not bring shame to you By unholy living.
How could I refuse to shun Ev'ry sinful pleasure
Since for me God's only Son Suffered without measure?

Graciously my faith renew; Help me bear my crosses,
Learning humbleness from you, Peace mid pain and losses.
May I give you love for love! Hear me, O my Savior,
That I may in heav'n above Sing your praise forever

SERMON

Luke 18:8-14

Hands. Can you imagine going the rest of your life, no, just the rest of the day without your hands? How would we zip up to go outside? How would we unzip to go inside? How would we brush our teeth? Or eat? I'm sure most of you have seen the videos of people without hands eating, brushing their teeth, even putting on make-up with their feet and their toes. I don't know about you, but seeing those videos amazes me and shows just how important hands are in our everyday lives.

So it's no surprise that hands would be important on the most important days in world history, the days we remember during this season of Lent and then Easter. So this year, let's look at hands, the "Hands of the Passion." But today, instead of looking at Good Friday or Easter hands, Judas' hands, Pilate's hands, or even Jesus' hands, we'll start with the hands of the two men in our Gospel lesson.

We're at the temple in Jerusalem. We see two men, a Pharisee and a tax collector, there at the temple to pray. They both start their prayers the same way: "God," but that's where the similarities end.

The first man is a Pharisee. For Pharisees, church and religion wasn't just a Saturday or Sunday kind of thing. For Pharisees, the temple, the Bible, being a Jew, being a religious Jew was at the center of their lives. Pharisees were on a mission. For some it started with this - by keeping the Law right - the Ten commandments and some 600 more - by keeping the Law right they would make themselves and the Jewish people right for God to step in and make things right for the Jewish nation. It Pharisee's mission may have started as a selfless mission, but for many Pharisees it turned into something completely self-centered - showing off how good and Jewish they were, showing off how good and godly they were, why? So they could pat themselves on the back as good and godly, better than others.

So the Pharisee says: "**God, I thank you**" The words sound good, don't they? We could start off a prayer with those same words. But the way he goes on shows he really wasn't thanking God at all. The Pharisee says: "**God, I thank you that I am not like other people – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector.**" What were his hands doing? Jesus doesn't tell us. Perhaps he had them folded, perhaps held out, perhaps raised up. However he had his hands, what was he doing? He was patting himself on the back for how good he was - he didn't sin like other people. And that's not all. He didn't just not sin like other people. He did right better than other people. He fasted twice a week - not just the once a year the Law of Moses required, but twice a week. And he gave a tenth of all he received, not just a tenth of his wages, but a tenth of everything he got. Sounds like a model citizen.

Then we have the tax collector. He was not a model citizen. At least his neighbors wouldn't have seen him as a model citizen. His neighbors would have seen him working for the Romans, foreigners who were bullying them, making their lives miserable. And so his neighbors would see him as a traitor, a disgrace, a bully squeezing the life out of them. You see, tax collectors didn't make an honest living charging honest taxes. They squeezed what they could out of their neighbors so they could live large.

This tax collector is at the temple. He's off by himself. What are his hands doing? He's not patting himself on the back; he's beating his chest. Not like an ape or a chimpanzee or Tarzan showing how strong they are; but as someone weak and hurting. He starts his prayer with the same "God," the same word as the Pharisee, but his prayer is so different. He simply prays: "**God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**" He doesn't talk himself up about how good he is, the good things he does; he doesn't talk himself up by talking other people down about how bad they are, how he doesn't do what they do. No, he sees the truth about himself; he sees the truth in God's Law. He can't even dare to look up to God. He sees the truth - he's guilty before God and his only hope is to beg for mercy. "**God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**"

What does Jesus think of that? "**I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**" Did you catch why Jesus told this story? Luke tells us that "**Jesus told this parable to certain people who trusted in themselves (that they were righteous) and looked down on everyone else.**"

It's easy to fall into that trap, isn't it? We hear of some sin, how somebody did this or that. What thought goes through the mind? Perhaps "How could they?" Perhaps "I wouldn't, I couldn't do anything like that." We hear how someone has done good, and we might think: "I've done that ... and more ... and better." Oh, we may not pray it out loud like the Pharisee, but it's so easy to think like the Pharisee, isn't it?

That's why we have Ash Wednesday every year, to remind us of the Pharisee and the tax-collector. It's why we confess together every week: "**God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**" It's why we prepare for the Lord's Supper remembering our need for the Supper. And it's why we fold our hands as we pray. For thousands of years, around the world, across different religions, folding hands has been a sign of humility, reverence. I won't say, because the Bible doesn't say, that folding hands is the only way to pray. Some people hold their hands out, empty hands up: "God, we come to you empty-handed needing your grace and mercy." Some people raise their hands: "God, we come to you." What we do with our hands isn't nearly as important as what we do with our hearts: "**God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**"

And what does God do? He remembers Jesus. He remembers how Jesus wasn't like other people, like those other people who sin; he remembers how Jesus wasn't like us, like you and me. He remembers how Jesus did right by God and how Jesus did right for his neighbor. He remembers how Jesus didn't feel a need to pat himself on the back; instead, he remembers how Jesus let himself be judged guilty. He doesn't remember Jesus to compare, to contrast, to judge you for not measuring up. No, he remembers Jesus stepping in and taking the place of the tax collector, taking the place of the Pharisee, taking your place and my place and doing right. He remember Jesus stepping in and taking the place of the tax collector, the place of the Pharisee, yes, taking your place and my place as guilty. God remembers how Jesus stepped in for you and - instead of judging you guilty, instead of judging you "not

good enough,” God sees you forgiven and right. As Jesus said: “justified,” not guilty, “just as if you’d never sinned,” “just as right as Jesus himself.” With Jesus, that’s the way God sees you!

What does that mean for you? When guilt is beating you down, when life is beating you down, when you need a God of mercy, you can come here knowing you have a God of mercy. Whether you’re standing before God’s altar, sitting at home, or curled up in a ball, begging: “God, have mercy on me, a sinner,” you can know the mercy of his hands - how they stretched out for you on the cross, and how his hands reach out for you in peace. Whether you’re folding your hands, stretching out your hands, raising your hands, begging God for help, you can know the mercy of his hands - stretched out to bless you. Whether you’re hearing, nodding, struggling, you can know the mercy of his hands - that he will work his plan and promise for you. And when it’s time to get up and go home, home out there or home up there, you can know the mercy of his hands - that with Jesus, you’re in good hands, God’s hands. Amen.

PRAYER AND 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.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on p. 2)

(Gluten free wafers are available; please see Pastor.)

M: The Lord be with you.



C: And al - so with you.

M: Lift up your hearts.



C: We lift them up un - to the Lord.

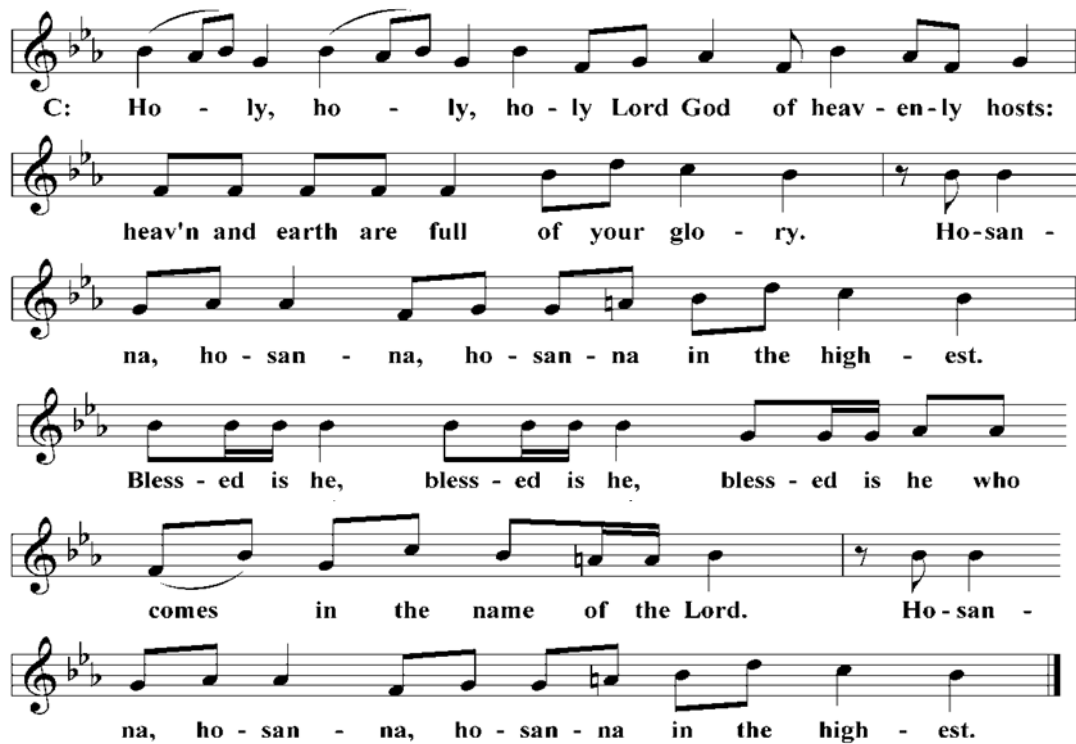
M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.



C: It is good and right so to do.

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared when he called people to repentance and pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts:
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san -
 na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.
 Bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san -
 na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.



C: A - men.

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD

C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;
have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A - - men.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Jesus, Grant that Balm and Healing"

Hymn 121

Jesus, grant that balm and healing In your holy wounds I find,
Ev'ry hour that I am feeling Pains of body and of mind.
Should some evil thought within Tempt my treach'rous heart to sin,
Show the peril, and from sinning Keep me from its first beginning.

Should some lust or sharp temptation Fascinate my sinful mind,
Let me think about your passion, And new courage I shall find.
Or should Satan press me hard, Let me then be on my guard,
Saying, "Christ for me was wounded," That the tempter flee confounded.

If the world my heart entices With the broad and easy road,
With seductive, sinful vices, Let me think about the load
You were willing to endure; Then I'll flee all thoughts impure,
Mastering each wild temptation, Calm in prayer and meditation.

Ev'ry wound that pains or grieves me By your wounds, Lord, is made whole;
When I'm weak, your cross revives me, Granting new life to my soul.
Yes, your comfort renders sweet Ev'ry bitter cup I meet;
For your all-atoning passion Has procured my soul's salvation.

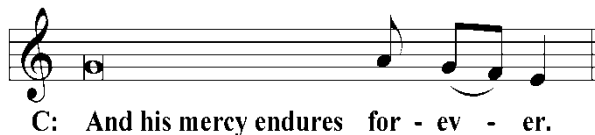
O my God, my Rock and Tower, Grant that in your death I trust,
 Knowing death has lost his power Since you crushed him in the dust.
 Savior, let your agony Ever help and comfort me;
 When I die be my protection, Light and life and resurrection.

SONG OF SIMEON



C: Lord, now you let your servant de - part in peace ac-cord-ing
 to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have pre -
 pared be - fore the face of all people, a light to light - en the
 Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra-el.

M: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.



C: And his mercy endures for - ev - er.

M: We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this holy supper. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C: A - men.

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.



CLOSING HYMN

"Abide with Me"

Hymn 588

Congregation sings vs. 1-2, 5-7

Choir sings vs. 3-4

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away.
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me!

*Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in thy wings,
Tears for all woes, a heart for ev'ry plea;
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.*

*Thou on my head in early youth didst smile,
And though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me oft as I left thee.
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me.*

I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour.
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me!

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

Acknowledgments

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Lent Customs and Opportunities

The Color Purple - the color of royalty reminds us of Christ as our King, willing to be crowned with thorns, willing to sacrifice himself for his people, fighting our battle against Satan and evil, winning our victory for life. When we see what our king was willing to go through for us, the color purple also becomes the color of repentance - our commitment to live with Christ as King.

Lenten Self-Denial Offering - some Christians find that giving up (sacrificing) some normal part of life (meat, candy, TV, for example) helps them consider Jesus' sacrifice for them. Some Christians find that a special gift (perhaps the savings from what they gave up) for Christ's church is a meaningful way to thank Jesus. Special gifts can be given for the special work of the church (any Lent offering envelope) or designated for a special project with the special offering envelope.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, the Christian's 40-day journey with the Lord to the cross and tomb, preparing for the proclamation of Easter. The 40 days are reminiscent of several biblical events: Jesus' 40-day fast at the beginning of his ministry, Moses' stay on Mount Sinai at the giving of the Law, Elijah's fast on his way to the mountain of God.

Ash Wednesday begins the Christian's Lenten journey with a reminder of our mortality and a call to repentance (Genesis 18:27; Job 46:6; Jeremiah 6:26; Matthew 11:21). The ancient practice of imposing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful gives Ash Wednesday its name. The church father Tertullian (A.D. 160-215) writes of the practice as a public expression of repentance and of our human frailty that stands in need of Christ. The ashes remind us forcefully of our need for redeeming grace as they recall words from the rite for Christian burial: "...earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust..." words, that will someday be spoken over us all. The imposition of ashes has never been an exclusively Roman Catholic practice and today is observed by Christians of many traditions.

Ashes on Ash Wednesday A Note From Other Years

For thousands of years, God's people have used ashes as a sign of sorrow over sin. For hundreds of years, Christ's Church has used ashes at the beginning of the season of Lent, now known as Ash Wednesday, to express our sorrow over sin.

We won't be placing ashes on your foreheads, but we will use ashes as a way to make the "confession we say" into a "confession we see" by marking our confession with ash. In our Ash Wednesday service we will have the opportunity to step forward, dip our finger into a bowl of ash, and place our mark in the form of a cross on a burlap banner. We will then wipe our fingers clean and return to our seats.

Why make a mark with ash? The symbolism is rich:

- we make our individual mark acknowledging our individual guilt
- we make our marks together confessing our common sinfulness
- we feel the rough texture of burlap - our sorrow and Christ's cross are rough and pained
- we mark the sign of the cross - the cost of our sin - declaring our confidence in Christ as our Savior.

Not everyone will feel comfortable joining in this symbolism, so don't feel pushed. Feel free to participate as you are comfortable. Or feel free not to participate. Either way, feel free in the forgiveness of Christ!