

# ASH WEDNESDAY



*You are dust,  
and to dust you shall return*  
Genesis 3:19

**FEBRUARY 17, 2021 -- 7:00 P.M.  
BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH, SPENCER IA**

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**PRELUDE:** *"Lead Me, Lord"* – Samuel Wesley

**GATHERING HYMN:** *"O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days"*

ELW 319, vv. 1 & 4

**GREETING**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Insert

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

**FIRST LESSON**

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

**PSALM**

Psalms 51:1-17

**SECOND LESSON**

II Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** (*spoken*)

**Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

**GOSPEL**

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

**SERMON**

Pastor Jeff Geiger

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** *“Change My Heart, O God”*

ELW 801

**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**

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**

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; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

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

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.**

**MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**OFFERING AND OFFERING PRAYER**

**THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**HOLY COMMUNION**

**POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission into the world.

**SENDING PRAYER**

Let us pray...

**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.**

**BLESSING AND DISMISSAL**

*Please leave the sanctuary in silence, remembering that Ash Wednesday is the most solemn and penitential day of the church year.*

Our Lenten journey has begun.

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Many thanks to this evening's worship volunteers:

Francis & Judy Hiemstra, greeters & ushers

Susan Geiger, reader; Randy Phillips, audio; Sandi Schmidt, video