

*SPIRIT OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH*

February 17, 2021

Ash Wednesday

**Ministers: Every Member of Spirit of Grace**

**Pastor Scott Hackler – Pastor Gary Benson**

*OUR VISION*

“To help our congregation and community know Christ and grow in faith, so we can run the race of life with grace, hope, peace, and joy.”

**PRELUDE: “Beneath the Cross of Jesus”** ..... Fred Bornhoeft

**INVITATION TO LENT**

P: Friends in Christ, today with Christians everywhere we enter the time of remembering Jesus’ passover from death to life.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God’s mercy. 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.

**GATHERING HYMN: “Chief of Sinners Though I Be”**

Chief of sinners though I be, / Jesus shed his blood for me, / died that I might live on high, / lives that I might never die. / As the branch is to the vine, / I am his, and he is mine.

Oh, the height of Jesus' love! / Higher than the heav'ns above, / deeper than the depths of sea, / lasting as eternity. / Love that found me—wondrous thought— / found me when I sought him not.

Text: William McComb, 1793-1870. Public Domain.

**CONFESSION**

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

P: Most holy and merciful God,

**C: 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.**

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: 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.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, 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, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

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

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

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 Savior,

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

P: Receive this promise through Jesus Christ, God has mercy on you, forgives you all your sin, strengthens you in all goodness and by the power of the Holy Spirit keeps you in eternal life.

**C: Amen.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us 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**

**SPECIAL MUSIC: “The Old Rugged Cross”** ..... Ken Carnes

**FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

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—a 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. Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend 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. Who 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? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather 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. Between 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?'"

P: Word of God, Word of life.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

**SERMON: "A Valentine from God"** ..... *Pastor Scott Hackler*

**HYMN: "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"**

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; / there is no shadow of turning with thee; / thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; / as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

**Refrain**

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! / Morning by morning new mercies I see; / all I have needed thy hand hath provided; / great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, / sun, moon, and stars in their courses above / join with all nature in manifold witness / to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. **Refrain**

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, / thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; / strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, / blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! **Refrain**

Text: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1866-1960; (c) 1923, 1951 Hope Publishing Co. Used by permission CCLI License No. 1347924.

**APOSTLES' CREED**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

**THE LORD'S SUPPER: WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

P: Let us pray: Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he come to us in his holy supper.

**C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

P: 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.

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

## LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

## DISTRIBUTION

## BLESSING AND PRAYER

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

Let us pray,

Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of those whom you have fed with one heavenly food; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

## ASH WEDNESDAY LITANY IN PLACE OF ASHES

P: On this day, as we enter the journey of Lent, the trumpet is sounding an alarm announcing the day of the Lord and calling us to open our hearts.

**C: Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.**

P: In this season of lengthening days, let us humbly return to the One who waits for us, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**C: Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.**

P: We acknowledge that we are entangled, both by our own impulses and by other forces that invite us to disregard the needs of the world today.

**C: Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.**

P: We hear the cries of people in need, some who look like us and other who do not; people who live in our neighborhoods and others who live in blighted communities; people who live in foreign places and in cultures we find hard to understand; and we hear the rhetoric that seeks to put one child of God against the other.

**C: Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.**

P: We who are but dust and ashes are also ones made in your image, Lord. Use us for you have put us in this world at this time for your purposes. Mold us as clay into those who reflect Christ's presence wherever we go.

**C: Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN: "In the Cross of Christ I Glory"

In the cross of Christ I glory, / tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time. / All the light of sacred story / gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me, / hopes deceive, and fears annoy, / never shall the cross forsake me; / lo, it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming / light and love upon my way, / from the cross the radiance streaming / adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, / by the cross are sanctified; / peace is there that knows no measure, / joys that through all time abide.

Text: John Bowring, 1792-1872. Public Domain. Text: traditional. Public Domain.

## **PRAYER**

**P:** 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.

**C: Amen.**

## **BENEDICTION**

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

**C: Amen.**

## **DISMISSAL**

**P:** 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.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

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### ***RUNNING THE RACE***

“Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13-14