

Febrary 18, 2026



ASH

Wednesday

Create in me
a clean heart,
O God,
and renew a
right spirit
within me.

Psalm 51:10

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

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Lord Jesus, Think on Me

David Cherwien
One License #10-302-2

The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Has Ended

David Cherwien
One License #245589

WELCOME

HYMN

Our Father, We Have Wandered RED ELW #606
(Vs. 1 & 3)

- 1 Our Father, we have wandered
and hidden from your face;
in foolishness have squandered
your legacy of grace.
But now, in exile dwelling,
we rise with fear and shame,
as, distant but compelling,
we hear you call our name.**

**3 O Lord of all the living,
both banished and restored,
compassionate, forgiving,
and ever-caring Lord,
grant now that our transgressing,
our faithlessness may cease.
Stretch out your hand in blessing,
in pardon, and in peace.**

Text: Kevin Nichols, 1929-2006

Text from *Resource Collection of Hymns and Service Music for the Liturgy* © 1981 International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved.

One License #27142 & Public Domain

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
And the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Gracious God, **out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy 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.

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.

¹ 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—

² 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.

¹² Yet even now, says the LORD,
 return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the LORD your God,
 for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
 and relenting from punishment.

¹⁴ 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?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶ gather the people.
Consecrate the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ 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?' "

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-17

¹ Have 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.**
³ For 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.**
⁵ Indeed, 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.**
⁷ Remove 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.**

- ⁹ Hide 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.**
- ¹¹ Cast 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.**
- ¹³ Let 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.**
- ¹⁵ O 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.**
- ¹⁷ The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

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.

^{20b} We entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! ³ We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine

love,⁷ truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;⁸ in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true,⁹ as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed,¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

PLEASE RISE FOR THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION—*Return to the Lord* RED ELW page 146

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

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

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

[Jesus said to the disciples:]¹ “Beware of practicing your righteousness 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.³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,⁴ so 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.⁶ But 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 somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so 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, ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON ON THE STEPS

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Be Thou My Vision RED ELW #793
(Vs. 1, 2 & 4)

- 1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought both by day and by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.**
- 4 Light of my soul, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931
Public Domain

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

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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

Amen.

THE PEACE

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

Albin C Whitworth

One License #1467394

OFFERING HYMN

Create in Me a Clean Heart **RED ELW #188**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit.**

OFFERTORY PRAYER

O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.
Through these gifts of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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

HOLY HOLY HOLY

RED ELW page 207

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest,
hosanna in the highest.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord, Jesus Christ took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying, "Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in 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 sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

Great is the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table.

Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

COMMUNION

(Zion practices an open table. God welcomes everyone to come forward. Young children may receive bread and a blessing. If you prefer not to receive, fold your hands and receive a blessing. Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available; please ask your servers. Come to the Lord's table and share in the feast!)

LAMB OF GOD

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace.**

RED ELW page 146

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross

Albin C Whitworth

CLI #3177987

Beautiful Savior RED ELW #838

Public Domain

COMMUNION BLESSING

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

God of our salvation,

**we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.**

**Through the body and blood of your Son,
may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

Amen.

SENDING

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

BLESSING

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:

God, who calls all things into existence,

Jesus Christ, who redeems us,

and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,

✠ bless you now and always.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Just As I Am, without One Plea RED ELW #592

**1 Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

- 2 Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 3 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 4 Just as I am; thy love unknown
has broken ev'ry barrier down;
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789-1871
Public Domain

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Little Prelude in G Minor

Bach
Public Domain



Acknowledgements:

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved.

License #SB122759—11/30/2026

One License #A-732489

4/15/2026 for ELW hymns

All rights reserved.

CCLI License #20990483

Copyright License + Streaming License—2/28/2026

All rights reserved.

Church ArtPro

Account #73982207—6/30/2026

Merciful God,
you called us forth from the dust of the earth;
you claimed us for Christ in the waters of baptism.
Look upon us as we enter these Forty Days
bearing the mark of ashes,
and bless our journey through the desert of Lent
to the font of rebirth.
May our fasting be hunger for justice;
our alms, a making of peace;
our prayer, the chant of humble and grateful hearts.
All that we do and pray is in the name of Jesus,
for in his cross you proclaim your love
for ever and ever.

Zion Lutheran Church
814 West Brooks St. P.O. Box 371
Arlington, MN 55307
Church: 507-964-5454
Email: zion.elca.814@gmail.com
Web: zionarlington.org // YouTube: Zion ELCA Arlington MN