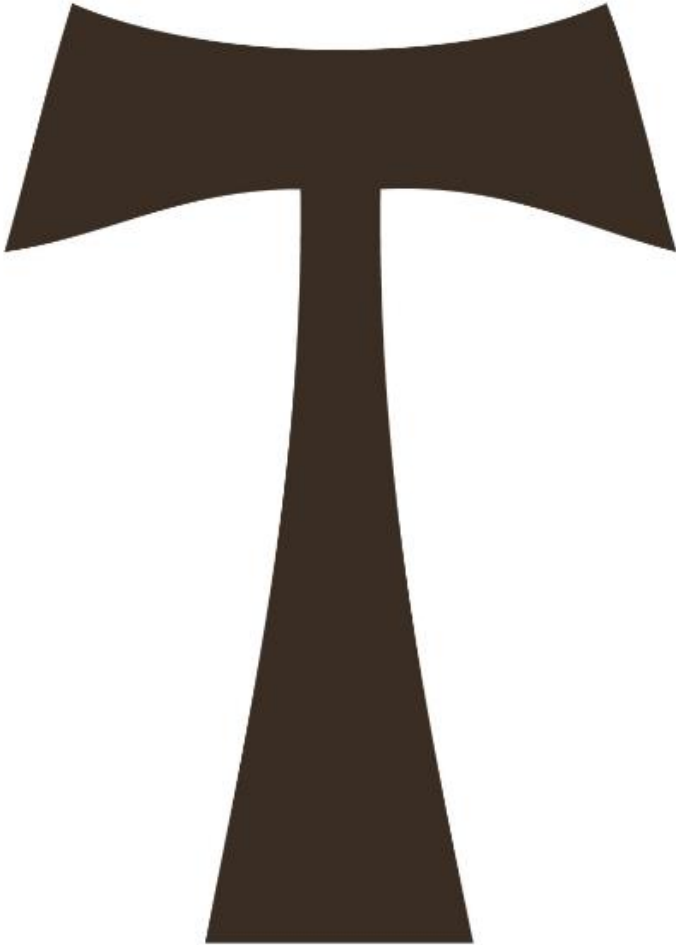


+ ASH WEDNESDAY +

February 22, 2023, 6:30 PM

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Altamont



**The Crosses of Lent
The Tau Cross—Prophecy**

WHY DO WE PUT ASHES ON OUR FOREHEADS?

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

For nearly a thousand years, these words have been spoken to young and old alike as the sign of the cross is traced on their foreheads with ashes—the Imposition of Ashes, as it has come to be known. During the last half of the 20th century, Lutherans have also begun to make use of this ancient rite, and indeed, it has been approved for use in our hymnal LSB. And so, as our catechism is prone to ask: "What does this mean?" Where did this rite come from, and how can it be used meaningfully in LCMS congregations today?

Ashes in the Bible

The Bible contains a number of references to ashes and dust (cf. Joshua 7:6; 1 Samuel 4:12; 2 Samuel 1:2, 15:32; Job 2:12, 16:15; Jeremiah 25:34; Lamentations 2:10; Ezekiel 27:30; Jonah 3:6). In fact, the Lord's curse on Adam, "dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19) is echoed in the Imposition of Ashes formula. In the New Testament, Jesus declares: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matthew 11:21). Thus, in the Bible, ashes carry a two-fold meaning: as a sign of human mortality (Genesis 3:19) and as a sign of public repentance (Matthew 11:21).

Ashes in Church History

This understanding carried over into the early and medieval church. Tertullian (ca. 160-225) describes the use of sackcloth and ashes in the penance of an adulterer before his pastor. Originally, ashes were reserved only for public penitents—i.e., murderers, adulterers and others who had fallen away from the church because of grave public sin but desired reconciliation. Such reconciliation could occur at a variety of times during the year, but by the medieval period, the beginning of Lent became a primary season of the church year for that reconciliation to take place.

By the 12th century, ashes became specifically associated with the beginning of Lent, thus providing the first day of Lent with its name, Ash Wednesday. However, by this time, everybody—pastors and people alike—had ashes either sprinkled on their head or traced on their foreheads in the sign of the cross. By the time of the Reformation, the imposition of ashes was a regular mainstay of Lenten piety and practice.

However, Lutherans at the time of the Reformation did not choose to retain the Imposition of Ashes. The reasons for this are not entirely clear since there is very little written for or against this practice by Luther and his colleagues. Thus, although Lutherans began Lent with Ash Wednesday, they did not retain the use of ashes as part of their Ash Wednesday order of service.

Ashes Today?

A contemporary Lutheran appropriation of the Imposition of Ashes should begin with the two-fold biblical understanding of ashes: as a sign of our mortality and as a sign of our repentance. Likewise, the traditional formula, "Remember, you are dust, and to dust you shall return," is most appropriate, since it paraphrases the words of God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:19). By receiving the ashes, the worshipper acknowledges that God's judgment against our sin is right and just. But the ashes are also made in the sign of the cross—the

very instrument by which our Lord took upon himself the punishment for our sin, in our place. Thus, the cross of ashes serves to remind us that we are sinners, and that Christ died for us sinners.

From: The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Commission On Worship

(Stand as the minister enters the sanctuary.)

ADDRESS

P Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

(Silence for reflection.)

LITANY FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

P O Lord,
C have mercy.
P O Christ,
C have mercy.
P O Lord,
C have mercy.
P O Christ,
C hear us.
P God the Father in heaven,
C have mercy.
P God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
C have mercy.
P God the Holy Spirit,
C have mercy.
P Be gracious to us.
C Spare us, good Lord.
P Be gracious to us.
C Help us, good Lord.

P By the mystery of Your holy incarnation;
by Your holy nativity;
by Your baptism, fasting, and temptation;
by Your agony and bloody sweat;
by Your cross and passion;
by Your precious death and burial;
by Your glorious resurrection and ascension;
and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

C Help us, good Lord.

P In all time of our tribulation;
in all time of our prosperity;
in the hour of death;
and in the day of judgment:

C Help us, good Lord.

P We poor sinners implore You

C to hear us, O Lord.

P To prosper the preaching of Your Word;
to bless our prayer and meditation;
to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith;
and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:

C We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P To draw all to Yourself;
to bless those who are instructed in the faith;
to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the
lonely, the forsaken, the abandoned, and all who stand in need of
our prayers;
to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy;
and to have mercy on us all:

C We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P To turn our hearts to You;
to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers;
and graciously to hear our prayers:

C We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C we implore You to hear us.

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
C have mercy.

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
C have mercy.

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
C grant us Your peace.

P O Christ,

C hear us.

P O Lord,

C have mercy.

P O Christ,

C have mercy.

- P** O Lord,
C have mercy. Amen.

CONCLUDING COLLECT

- P** O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

(Sit. The pastor and assistants receive ashes first, followed by the congregation. Using the right thumb, the pastor or an assistant place the ashes on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, saying:)

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

(After receiving the ashes, each person returns to his place in silence. There is no statement of dismissal.)

HYMN 607 From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee

(Sung during imposition of ashes)

- 1 From depths of woe I cry to Thee,
In trial and tribulation;
Bend down Thy gracious ear to me,
Lord, hear my supplication.
If Thou rememb'rest ev'ry sin,
Who then could heaven ever win
Or stand before Thy presence?
- 2 Thy love and grace alone avail
To blot out my transgression;
The best and holiest deeds must fail
To break sin's dread oppression.
Before Thee none can boasting stand,
But all must fear Thy strict demand
And live alone by mercy.
- 3 Therefore my hope is in the Lord
And not in mine own merit;
It rests upon His faithful Word
To them of contrite spirit
That He is merciful and just;

**This is my comfort and my trust.
His help I wait with patience.**

**4 And though it tarry through the night
And till the morning waken,
My heart shall never doubt His might
Nor count itself forsaken.
O Israel, trust in God your Lord.
Born of the Spirit and the Word,
Now wait for His appearing.**

**5 Though great our sins, yet greater still
Is God's abundant favor;
His hand of mercy never will
Abandon us, nor waver.
Our shepherd good and true is He,
Who will at last His Israel free
From all their sin and sorrow.**

Text: Public domain

(After all have received the ashes, the service continues with the Service of Confession and Absolution in the Divine Service.)

+ CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +

(Stand. The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.)

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

EXHORTATION

LSB 184

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,
C **who made heaven and earth.**
P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,
C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

(Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.)

CONFESSION OF SINS

LSB 184

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

ABSOLUTION

LSB 185

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

(Sit)

+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +

The Passion of our Lord from Matthew 26:1-13

P This is the word of the Lord

C Thanks be to God.

(Stand)

HOLY GOSPEL John 3:14-15

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the third chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, And was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the scriptures; And ascended into heaven, And sits at the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe one holy Christian and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, And I look for the resurrection of the dead, And the life of the world to come. Amen.

(Sit)

HYMN 560 Drawn to the Cross, Which Thou Hast Blessed

- 1 Drawn to the cross, which Thou hast blessed
With healing gifts for souls distressed,
To find in Thee my life, my rest,
Christ crucified, I come.
- 2 Thou knowest all my griefs and fears,
Thy grace abused, my misspent years;
Yet now to Thee with contrite tears,
Christ crucified, I come.
- 3 Wash me and take away each stain;
Let nothing of my sin remain.
For cleansing, though it be through pain,
Christ crucified, I come.
- 4 And then for work to do for Thee,
Which shall so sweet a service be
That angels well might envy me,
Christ crucified, I come.

Text: Public domain

SERMON: The Tau Cross—Prophecy: *Benefiting from Hindsight*

THE OFFERING IS GATHERED

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

+ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT +

PREFACE

LSB 194

- P** The Lord be with you.
G And with thy spirit.

- P** Lift up your hearts.
C We lift them up unto the Lord.
P Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.
C It is meet and right so to do.

PROPER PREFACE

LSB 194

- P** It is truly meet, right, and salutary . . . evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

LSB 195



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;
 heav'n and earth are full of Thy 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 that com-eth in the name of the Lord.
 Ho-san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

LORD'S PRAYER

LSB 196

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

LSB 197

PAX DOMINI

LSB 197

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

AGNUS DEI

LSB 198



C O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the

world, have mer-cy up-on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that
 tak-est a-way the sin of the world, have mer-cy up-on us.
 O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the
 world, grant us Thy peace. A - - - men.

(Sit)

DISTRIBUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER HYMNS

435 Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain

- 1 Come to Calv'ry's holy mountain,
 Sinners, ruined by the fall;
 Here a pure and healing fountain
 Flows for you, for me, for all,
 In a full, perpetual tide,
 Opened when our Savior died.
- 2 Come in poverty and meanness,
 Come defiled, without, within;
 From infection and uncleanness,
 From the leprosy of sin,
 Wash your robes and make them white;
 Ye shall walk with God in light.
- 3 Come in sorrow and contrition,
 Wounded, impotent, and blind;
 Here the guilty, free remission,
 Here the troubled, peace may find.
 Health this fountain will restore;
 They that drink shall thirst no more.
- 4 They that drink shall live forever;
 'Tis a soul-renewing flood.
 God is faithful; God will never
 Break His covenant of blood,

**Signed when our Redeemer died,
Sealed when He was glorified.**

Text: Public domain

Hymn 423 Jesus, Refuge of the Weary

- 1** Jesus, refuge of the weary,
Blest Redeemer, whom we love,
Fountain in life's desert dreary,
Savior from the world above:
Often have Your eyes, offended,
Gazed upon the sinner's fall;
Yet upon the cross extended,
You have borne the pain of all.
- 2** Do we pass that cross unheeding,
Breathing no repentant vow,
Though we see You wounded, bleeding,
See Your thorn-encircled brow?
Yet Your sinless death has brought us
Life eternal, peace, and rest;
Only what Your grace has taught us
Calms the sinner's deep distress.
- 3** Jesus, may our hearts be burning
With more fervent love for You;
May our eyes be ever turning
To behold Your cross anew
Till in glory, parted never
From the blessed Savior's side,
Graven in our hearts forever,
Dwell the cross, the Crucified.

Text: Public domain

(Stand)

THANKSGIVING

LSB 200

- P** O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
C And his mercy endures forever.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

- P** Let us pray...
C Amen

SALUTATION

LSB 201

- P** The Lord be with you.
C And with your spirit.

BENEDICAMUS

LSB 202

- P** Bless we the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

LSB 202

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and + give you peace.
- C** Amen.

(Sit)

426 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

- 1** When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.
- 2** Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.
- 3** See, from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
- 4** Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

Text: Public domain

There is a meeting after the service for parents and students in eighth grade confirmation class in the lower level of the Parish Hall.