

Ash
Wednesday



HEART TO HEART: SACKCLOTH AND ASHES TO ROBES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Sackcloth and ashes—the signs of mourning and repentance in the pages of Scripture. Today, we begin our Lenten journey. Today, we begin our return from exile. This is not a journey that begins with rejoicing and excitement; it begins with ashes. Our Lenten journey begins with ashes on our foreheads, a sign of broken and repentant hearts. God does not desire our sacrifices, as if we could atone for or cover our own sin. God desires broken and contrite hearts which He will not despise (Psalm 51:17). Any efforts to cover up, to pay for, or to atone for our own sin only results in more sackcloth and ashes, even death. It is God who responds to the ashes of our repentance by sending His only-begotten Son. Jesus Christ, on the cross, has washed our foreheads of the ashes of our sins, has removed the sackcloth of our guilt, and has clothed us in His robes of righteousness and garments of salvation. The pure and holy white linen garments that adorn the saints in heaven cover us as we long for the day when we will join them around the throne.

OPENING HYMN **“O Lord, Throughout these Forty Days”** **LSB 418**

INVOCATION

P: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son ☩ and of the Holy Spirit,

C: **Amen.**

ASH WEDNESDAY ADDRESS

P: Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a sacred 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.

With that in mind, this year our theme for our Lenten worship will focus upon the journey, and our overall theme will be “Return from Exile: A Lenten Journey.” We begin our journey today with ashes while lamenting our sins. We complete our journey rising with Christ, cleansed by Baptism wearing robes of righteousness.

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 Lenten season for us so that we may

come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the resurrection celebration in sincerity and truth.

LITANY

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 teaching 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 quicken 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: O Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C: Have mercy.

P: O Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C: Have mercy.

P: O Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C: Grant us Your peace.

P: Lord Jesus Christ,

C: Hear us.

P: O Lord,

C: Have mercy.

P: O Christ,

C: Have mercy.

P: O Lord,

C: Have mercy. Amen.

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 us, poor miserable sinners, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the rewards 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.

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

HYMN

“Savior, When in Dust to Thee”

LSB 419

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- P: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love;
C: **According to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.**
- P: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!
C: **For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.**
- P: Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight,
C: **So that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment.**
- P: Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
C: **Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being, and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**
- P: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
C: **Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**
- P: Let me hear joy and gladness;
C: **Let the bones that You have broken rejoice.**
- P: Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
C: **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 to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.**
- P: Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You.
C: **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.**

ABSOLUTION

- P: In the Garden of Eden, our gracious God covered our naked, sinful parents with garments of skins. But in the Paradise promised to us, we shall be clothed with white robes of Christ's own righteousness. Even now, as His baptized children, our heavenly Father looks on us with our sins washed away. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C: **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P: Let us pray. Lord Jesus, our first parents were barred from the Tree of Life and from Eden itself, but You have opened heaven's gate to us, where Paradise awaits.
C: **Grant us faith each day to follow where You have led the way, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Joel 2:12–19

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Revelation 7:9–14

ANTHEM

“Open My Eyes, Let Me See”

Chancel Choir

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

THE SERMON HYMN

“We Are Exiles from the Garden”

1

*We are exiles from the garden,
Banished by our sinful choice,
Terrified to seek His pardon,
Hiding from our Father’s voice.
Underneath the branches swaying,
Sweat and blood fall to the ground.
In the darkness, Christ is praying;
He comes forward to be bound.*

2

*Leaves will fail our vain concealing
Our true nakedness and shame.
We must rend our hearts, revealing
All our guilt and sinful blame.
Jesus takes our flesh and sentence
As His clothes are claimed below.
We fall down in true repentance;
His new robe He will bestow.*

3

*On the mount, the Lord is waiting
For the proper sacrifice.
What is worth His wrath abating?
Who could pay the dreadful price?
God the Son will be the scion.
God the Father will provide.
God the Spirit points to Zion;
There, with God, we will abide.*

4

*On this journey we are taking,
We fear not what lies in store.
Though our feeble wills are breaking,
We know Christ has gone before.
As we walk the way completed,
On His throne, the Savior waits.
Death and hell have been unseated.
We behold the open gates!*

THE SERMON

“Heart to Heart: Sackcloth and Ashes to Robes of Righteousness”

THE NICENE CREED

THE OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- P: On Ash Wednesday, when we especially remember our sin and our mortality, let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.
- P: Merciful Father, Your Son was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. Give Your baptized children strength to withstand persecution and temptation. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C: Hear our prayer.**
- P: Father, Your Son heard the devil twist the words of Holy Scripture and yet was not deceived. Give us ears, minds, and hearts to receive Your Word for our own defense, endurance, and confession of the true Christian faith; Lord, in Your mercy,
- C: Hear our prayer.**
- P: Lord God, King of the Universe, You have chosen to provide for all people through earthly government and commerce. Give us rulers and business people who conduct all affairs within Your good and gracious law, so that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way, because this is pleasing in Your sight, and You desire all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C: Hear our prayer.**
- P: Almighty God, there are many who would gladly extinguish Your Gospel and Your people. Bless our enemies, turn their hearts to Yourself and enlighten their minds with Your truth and cause us to live together in peace. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C: Hear our prayer.**
- P: Merciful Father, You know the trials and suffering of Your children. We ask You especially to care for our loved ones, who are suffering in any way, those we name aloud and those we hold silently in hearts... Lord, in Your mercy,
- C: Hear our prayer.**
- P: Father, Your Son gave His living and life-giving body and blood for us to eat and drink that through it, forgiveness of sin, life and salvation would crowd out the death that we have inherited. Give us deep and abiding joy even during this penitential season. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C: Hear our prayer.**
- P: Into Your hands, gracious Father, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C: Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

HOLY COMMUNION

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary ... evermore praising You and saying:

THE CONSECRATION

HYMN

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

LSB 507, Vs. 2 & 4

THE DISTRIBUTION

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

“Not all the Blood of Beasts”

LSB 431

ANTHEM

“Come Be Fed”

Chancel Choir

BENEDICTION

P: Let us pray, Lord Jesus, Savior and Guide,

C: **Give us the eyes of faith to see the tree of life awaiting us in heaven, and guide us to follow where You have led the way.**

P: Protecting Father,

C: **Assure us of Your presence on our journey through the desert of this world and bring us at last to the paradise purchased by Your Son.**

P: O Holy Spirit,

C: **Nourish our faith and restore our souls each time we come to the Table of the Lord and receive His body and blood, a foretaste of the feast to come.**

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

C: **And also with you.**

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.**

HYMN

“On My Heart Imprint Your Image

LSB 422