



The Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills
ASH WEDNESDAY, March 1, 2017

6:45 pm

AS WE GATHER

Ash Wednesday is one of the most solemn days of the Church Year. This liturgy marks the beginning of a penitential discipline that climaxes with the service on Easter Sunday. The mood is penitential and reflective on our baptismal faith and life. Worshippers are asked to keep reverent silence before the service and leave the service in silence. There will be no greeting at the door by the pastor.

Originally, Lent was the time when candidates for Holy Baptism were intently preparing to be baptized at the Vigil of Easter. We, too, in this season of Lent prepare ourselves to remember our baptism at Easter as we ritually "pass over" with Jesus from death to new life.

Today in the celebration of the Holy Communion, worshippers will have the opportunity to receive ashes on their foreheads as a sign of penitence and baptismal remembrance.

The ashes are prepared by burning palm branches from last Palm Sunday. Their use suggests in a dramatic way God's judgment and condemnation of sin, our frailty and total dependence on God, humiliation and repentance. The words spoken as ashes are imposed, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return," were first spoken to Adam after his fall into sin. We are forcefully reminded of the words of the committal in the Burial Service, "...earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Ashes also suggest cleansing and renewal. They were once used as a cleaning agent. Thus, ashes imposed in the shape of a cross symbolize both judgment and baptismal cleansing. The front of the church and the chancel is very bare, symbolizing our Lenten journey through a barren wilderness of sin.

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

“Hear Me, O My Precious Love”

ASH WEDNESDAY ADDRESS

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 also 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 that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

OPENING VERSE

“Jesus I Will Ponder Now”

LSB #440 (v. 1)



1 Je - sus, I will pon - der now On Your ho - ly pas - sion;
With Your Spir - it me en - dow For such med - i - ta - tion.
Grant that I in love and faith May the im - age cher - ish
Of Your suf - f'ring, pain, and death That I may not per - ish.

KYRIE/LITANY

O Lord,
have mercy.

O Christ,
have mercy.

O Lord,
have mercy.

God the Father, in heaven,
have mercy.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
have mercy.

God the Holy Spirit,
have mercy.

Be gracious to us.
Spare us, good Lord.

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:

Help us, good Lord.

In all times of tribulation; in all times of prosperity; in the hour of death;
and in the day of judgment:

Help us, good Lord.

We poor sinners implore You
to hear us, O Lord.

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

We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

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:

We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

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

We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

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

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

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

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.

Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

(During the singing of the hymn, anyone who wishes may approach to receive the Imposition of Ashes. Please remain seated if you do not desire to receive the ashes. Ashes symbolize our sinful state before God which results in our own mortality. The sign of the cross reminds us of our baptism and points to the free gift of forgiveness and eternal life that God gives to us in Jesus Christ.)

(Please see page 4 for hymn during imposition of ashes)

HYMN DURING THE IMPOSITION**"Chief of Sinners, Though I Be"**

LSB #611



1 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Je - sus shed His
 2 Oh, the height of Je - sus' love, High - er than the
 3 On - ly Je - sus can im - part Balm to heal the
 4 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Christ is all in



blood for me, Died that I might live on high,
 heav'ns a - bove, Deep - er than the depths of sea,
 wound - ed heart, Peace that flows from sin for - giv'n,
 all to me; All my wants to Him are known,



Lives that I might nev - er die. As the branch is
 Last - ing as e - ter - ni - ty! Love that found me—
 Joy that lifts the soul to heav'n, Faith and hope to
 All my sor - rows are His own. He sus - tains the



to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.
 won - drous thought! Found me when I sought Him not.
 walk with God In the way that E - noch trod.
 hid - den life Safe with Him from earth - ly strife.

5 O my Savior, help afford
 By Your Spirit and Your Word!
 When my wayward heart would stray,
 Keep me in the narrow way;
 Grace in time of need supply
 While I live and when I die.

PRAYER

Lord, let these ashes be a reminder to us that we are but dust. May these ashes imprinted on our foreheads remind us of our mortality, and by Your holy Word may we be brought to true repentance, trusting solely in Christ as the source of our eternal salvation. May our Lenten journey, begun this day, continue to propel us forward to the victorious day of resurrection and triumph. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joel 2:12-19

¹²"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. ¹⁴Who 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? ¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. ¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" ¹⁸Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. ¹⁹The LORD answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

II Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

¹Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM

“O Lord, Hear Me”

Arr. H.H. Hopson

O Lord, hear me, heed my supplication. Come in love to heal my broken spirit.

O Lord, hear me, heed my supplication. Come in love to heal my broken spirit.

Look in mercy, see my anguish, heed my supplication.

Look in mercy, see my anguish, heal my broken spirit.

Look in mercy, see my anguish, heed my supplication.

Look in mercy, see my anguish, heal my broken spirit.

Show me the way, and guide my footsteps.

Show me the way, and guide my footsteps.

O Lord hear me, heed my supplication.

Look in mercy, see my anguish, heal my broken spirit.

Lord, in your mercy, hear me.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

¹[Jesus said:] "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

²"Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁵"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

⁶But when 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[Jesus said:]

"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ¹⁹"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON HYMN

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

LSB #770



1 What a friend we have in Je - sus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
2 Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?
3 Are we weak and heav - y lad - en, Cum - bered with a load of care?



What a priv - i - lege to car - ry Ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged— Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge— Take it to the Lord in prayer.



Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit; Oh, what need - less pain we bear—
Can we find a friend so faith - ful Who will all our sor - rows share?
Do thy friends de - spise, for - sake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer.



All be - cause we do not car - ry Ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness— Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In His arms He'll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a sol - ace there.

SERMON

"What a 'Foe' We Have in Jesus"

I John 1:8-9

Pastor Michael Ahlemeyer

GATHERING OF THE OFFERING

VOLUNTARY

OFFERTORY

"Create in Me a Clean Heart"



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -



new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -



way from Thy pres - ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it



from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -



tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it. A - men.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

LUTHER'S QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT

Do you believe that you are a sinner?

Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.

How do you know this?

From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.

Are you sorry for your sins?

Yes. I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

What have you deserved from God because of your sins?

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation.

Do you hope to be saved?

Yes, that is my hope.

In whom then do you trust?

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?

He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?

Yes, I believe it.

What convinces you to believe this?

The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

Why should we remember and proclaim His death?

First, so we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners.

Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it. Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble. Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without.

Holy God, as we are gathered in true repentance, our need for redemption is as real to us as ever. Thank You for sending Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to walk upon this earth and to take our sins upon Himself. In remembrance of His life-giving sacrifices let us now faithfully eat and drink of His body and blood and receive anew forgiveness, life, and salvation. Hear us as we pray in His name, and as He has taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER

(Inside back LSB cover)

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The peace of the Lord be with us always.

Amen.

COMMUNION HYMNS

"Let My Prayer Rise Before You"

Choir

"Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart"

LSB #708

"Lord Jesus Think on Me"

LSB #610

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

God of grace and mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, You reconciled us to Yourself.

Following His example of prayer and fasting, may we obey You and serve one another in holy love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

BLESSING FOR THE LENTEN JOURNEY

May the almighty and merciful Lord lead us in the ways of peace.

Show us Your ways, O Lord, and lead us along right pathways.

Guide us on our Lenten journey,

that we may keep Your commandments.

Stay with us along the way,

that we may grow in grace. Amen.

BENEDICTION

As you go on your way, may Christ go with you. May He go before you to show you the way. May He go behind you to encourage you. May He go beside you to befriend you, above you to watch over you, and within you to give you peace. In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

HYMN

"Abide With Me"

LSB #878 (v. 1, 5-6)



I A - bide with me, fast falls the e - ven - tide.



The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide.



When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,



Help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.

- 5 I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if Thou abide with me!
- 6 Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

POSTLUDE

-Please depart in silence-



~Thank you to our musician~
Melissa Phillips – flute

Lenten Schedule

Worship at 6:45 pm
(Dinner at 6:00 pm)

March 8, 15, 22, 29 & April 5

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday Worship

April 9 at 8:00 am & 10:30 am

Maundy Thursday Worship

April 13 at 7:00 pm

Good Friday Worship

April 14 at 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday Worship

April 16 at 8:00 am & 10:30 am

Easter Breakfast 8:45-10:15 am

Egg Hunt 9:30 am