



Ash Wednesday
Worship Service

March 5, 2025

St. Paul Luthera Church
Serbin, TX

THE HAND OF THE LORD WHO FREELY GIVES

The Christmas trees we decorated with careful hands just a few months ago have come and gone. The account of our salvation in Jesus Christ, the Babe of Bethlehem, has progressed from the manger through the Epiphany light of our Lord's proclamation of "liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind" (Luke 4:18; see Isaiah 61:1). The palm fronds we held and waved with our hands with cheers and hosannas a year ago have since withered and turned to the ashes we bless this night in hope. Lent returns, reminding us that the Christian life is one of repeated, daily repentance and faith because, though our deliverance is made sure, we walk by faith in the "not yet" of complete holiness and final release from sin. Repentance means we come this night with empty hands, that is, the confession of our total need of God's mercy, grace, and deliverance. We come to the God who has revealed Himself in love in the forgiveness of our sin by means of His own bloody, substitutionary sacrifice in our own human flesh for us and for our salvation. With the pastor's hands the ashes of our failings and sin are placed over the sign we received at our Baptism, and we are welcomed to repentance and faith freely given by the hand of the Lord.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Stand

ASH WEDNESDAY 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

- 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.

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.

- 1 Savior, when in dust to Thee Low we bow the_adoring knee;
When, repentant, to the skies Scarce we lift our weeping eyes;
O, by all Thy pains and woe Suffered once for us below,
Bending from Thy throne on high, Hear our penitential cry!
- 2 By Thy helpless infant years, By Thy life of want and tears,
By Thy days of deep distress In the savage wilderness,
By the dread, mysterious hour Of the_insulting tempter’s pow’r,
Turn, O turn a fav’ring eye; Hear our penitential cry!
- 3 By Thine hour of dire despair, By Thine agony of prayer,
By the cross, the nail, the thorn, Piercing spear, and torturing scorn,
By the gloom that veiled the skies O’er the dreadful sacrifice,
Listen to our humble sigh; Hear our penitential cry!
- 4 By Thy deep expiring groan, By the sad sepulchral stone,
By the vault whose dark abode Held in vain the rising God,
O, from earth to heav’n restored, Mighty, reascended Lord,
Bending from Thy throne on high, Hear our penitential cry!

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Stand

Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.
P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
C But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection on God’s Word and for self-examination.

- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You 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; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.
P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. 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.

PSALM

PSALM 51:1–4, 10–12

- 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 Create in me a clean heart, O God,

C and renew a right spirit within me.

P Cast me not away from Your presence,

C and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.

P Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,

C and uphold me with a willing spirit.

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

KYRIE

P In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C Amen.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; 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

OLD TESTAMENT READING

JOEL 2:12-19

P The Old Testament Reading is from Joel, the second chapter.

"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and 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. 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; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather 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. Between 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?'"

Then the LORD became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. The 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."

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

GRADUAL

HEBREWS 12:2

[O come, let us fix our eyes on] Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

EPISTLE

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20B–6:10

P The Epistle is from Second Corinthians, the fifth and sixth chapters.

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Working together with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For 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. We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

VERSE FOR LENT

C **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.**

HOLY GOSPEL

MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

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

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[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.

"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. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"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. But 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. . . .

"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. But when you fast, anoint your head

and wash your face, that 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.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Sit

HYMN: ♪“ROCK OF AGES, CLEFT FOR ME”

LSB 761

- 1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood, From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure: Cleanse me from its guilt and pow’r.**
- 2 Not the labors of my hands Can fulfill Thy Law’s demands;
Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone.**
- 3 Nothing in my hand I bring; Simply to Thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to Thee for dress; Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Savior, or I die.**
- 4 While I draw this fleeting breath, When mine eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown, See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.**

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SERMON: “THE HAND OF THE LORD WHO FREELY GIVES”

By Pastor John Schmidt

Stand

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

G **Amen.**

OFFERTORY

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

Sit

OFFERING

As offerings are brought forward the congregation stands and sings.

**1 We give Thee but Thine own, Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.**

**2 May we Thy bounties thus As stewards true receive
And gladly, as Thou blessest us, To Thee our firstfruits give!**

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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 will 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 in 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.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

☩ Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. For the holy Christian Church throughout the world and for all who enter this holy season of Lent in true repentance and faith—that God guard and defend us from the temptations of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh; cleanse our hearts; and renew a right spirit within us—let us pray to the Lord.

☩ Lord, have mercy.

☩ For all who do not know the gracious invitation of God through His Son to return to Him—that many may hear and be drawn to the Lord’s merciful and saving hands—let us pray to the Lord.

☩ Lord, have mercy.

☩ For those who have wandered from the faith—that the Holy Spirit restore them to the only hope of salvation—let us pray to the Lord.

☩ Lord, have mercy.

☩ For the government and those placed in positions of authority—that they perform their duties with honor for the good of all people—let us pray to the Lord.

☩ Lord, have mercy.

☩ For all who suffer from sickness, injury, or any need—that the Lord’s healing hand rest upon them, giving them strength to bear their infirmities with patience—let us pray to the Lord.

☩ Lord, have mercy.

☩ Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

☩ Amen.

PREFACE

P The Lord be with you.

G And with thy spirit.

P Lift up your hearts.

G We lift them up unto the Lord.

P Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.

G It is meet and right so to do.

P It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who, sharing Your eternal splendor, was presented on this day in Your temple in the substance of our human flesh and revealed by the Spirit as the glory of Israel and the light of all peoples. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

G Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

LORD'S PRAYER

P 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.

G For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

G Amen.

AGNUS DEI

G O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace. Amen.

Sit

DISTRIBUTION

DISTRIBUTION HYMN: ♪“FROM DEPTHS OF WOE I CRY TO THEE”

LSB 607

- 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.

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DISTRIBUTION HYMN: ♪“WHEN IN THE HOUR OF DEEPEST NEED”

LSB 615

- 1 When in the hour of deepest need We know not where to look for aid;
When days and nights of anxious thought No help or counsel yet have brought,
- 2 Then is our comfort this alone That we may meet before Your throne;
To You, O faithful God, we cry For rescue in our misery.
- 3 For You have promised, Lord, to heed Your children’s cries in time of need
Through Him whose name alone is great, Our Savior and our advocate.
- 4 And so we come, O God, today And all our woes before You lay;
For sorely tried, cast down, we stand, Perplexed by fears on ev’ry hand.
- 5 O from our sins, Lord, turn Your face; Absolve us through Your boundless grace.
Be with us in our anguish still; Free us at last from ev’ry ill.
- 6 So we with all our hearts each day To You our glad thanksgiving pay,
Then walk obedient to Your Word, And now and ever praise You, Lord.

Text: Public domain

DISTRIBUTION HYMN: ♪ "FORGIVE OUR SINS AS WE FORGIVE"

LSB 843

- 1 "Forgive our sins as we forgive," You taught us, Lord, to pray;
But You alone can grant us grace To live the words we say.**
- 2 How can Your pardon reach and bless The unforgiving heart
That broods on wrongs and will not let Old bitterness depart?**
- 3 In blazing light Your cross reveals The truth we dimly knew:
What trivial debts are owed to us, How great our debt to You!**
- 4 Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls And bid resentment cease;
Then, bound to all in bonds of love, Our lives will spread Your peace.**

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Stand

NUNC DIMITTIS

- ☩♪ Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

THANKSGIVING

☩ O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,

☩♪ and His mercy endureth forever.

☩ Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

☩♪ Amen.

SALUTATION AND BENEDICAMUS

☩ The Lord be with you.

☩♪ And with thy spirit.

☩ Bless we the Lord.

☩♪ Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

☩ 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.

☩♪ Amen, amen, amen.

CLOSING HYMN: ♪“LORD, TAKE MY HAND AND LEAD ME”

LSB 722

- 1 Lord, take my hand and lead me Upon life’s way;
Direct, protect, and feed me From day to day.
Without Your grace and favor I go astray;
So take my hand, O Savior, And lead the way.**

- 2 Lord, when the tempest rages, I need not fear,
For You, the Rock of Ages, Are always near.
Close by Your side abiding, I fear no foe,
For when Your hand is guiding, In peace I go.**

- 3 Lord, when the shadows lengthen And night has come,
I know that You will strengthen My steps toward home.
Then nothing can impede me, O blessèd Friend;
So take my hand and lead me Unto the end.**

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SILENT PRAYER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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