

Ash Wednesday Service

Prelude –

Significance of the Day

Psalm 51:1-13 – LBW p. 239 (Read responsively)

People: Glory 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

Pastor: Brothers and Sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with him, with all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of his creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. By our sin we grieve God, who does not desire us to come under his judgement, but that we turn to him and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer and works of love – the disciplines of Lent – help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle, and confess your sins, asking God for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

Most Holy and Merciful Father:

People: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

Pastor: 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.

People: Have mercy on us, Lord.

Pastor: We have been deaf 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.

People: Have mercy on us, Lord.

Pastor: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

People: we confess to you, Lord.

Pastor: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways and our exploitation of other people,

People: we confess to you, Lord.

Pastor: Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

People: we confess to you, Lord.

Pastor: Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

People: we confess to you, Lord.

Pastor: Our negligence in prayer and worship and our failure to live out the faith that is in us,

People: we confess to you, Lord.

Pastor: Accept our repentance, Lord, for wrongs we have done, for blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

People: accept our repentance, Lord.

Pastor: For all false judgements, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

People: accept our repentance, Lord.

Pastor: For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

People: accept our repentance, Lord.

Pastor: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

People: Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen

The congregation may be seated.

The Imposition of Ashes – *Those wishing to participate are encouraged to come to the head of the aisle at this time.*

Meditation Music – organ medley

Pastor: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

People: that we may show forth your glory in the world.

Pastor: By the cross and passion of your Son, our Lord,

People: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Pastor: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore we implore him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

(Silence. Please be seated.)

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everliving God, you hate nothing you have made and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may obtain from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Hymn – LBW #309 *Lord Jesus, Think on Me*

Lessons – Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 & II Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

This is the word of the Lord.

(C) Thanks be to God!

Lenten Response – LBW p. 63 *“Return to the Lord...”*

Gospel – Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

(L) This is the gospel of the Lord.

(C) Thanks be to God!

Sermon – Pastor

Hymn of the Day – LBW #91 *Savior, When in Dust...*

(Tune: LBW #90)

1. Savior, when in dust to you / Low we bow in homage due;
When, repentant, to the skies, Scarce we lift our weeping eyes;
Oh, by all your pains and woe / Suffered once for us below,
Bending from your throne on high, Hear our penitential cry!

2. By your helpless infant years, by your life of want and tears,
By your days of deep distress / In the savage wilderness,
By the dread, mysterious hour / Of the insulting tempter's pow'r,
Turn, oh, turn a fav'ring eye; Hear our penitential cry!

3. By your hour of dire despair, By your 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 your deep expiring groan, By the sad sepulchral stone,
By the vault whose dark abode / Held in vain the rising God,
Oh, from earth to heav'n restored, Mighty, re-ascended Lord,
Bending from your throne on high, Hear our penitential cry!

Apostles' Creed – WOV p. 19

Prayers

Lord, in your mercy...

(C) Hear our prayer.

Offering/Offertory – *Create in Me*

Lord's Prayer and Benediction

Hymn – LBW #99 *O Lord, throughout ...*

Pastor: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

St. John's Lutheran Church

February 17, 1999 + 1:00pm

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent. A season of renewal. A time in which Christians consider the meaning of their baptism into Christ and his church. During this service we are invited to receive the imposition of ashes in the sign of the cross upon our foreheads. The mark of the cross is accompanied by some sobering words, *"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

These words remind us that our entire existence is animated by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. The ashes remind us that as mortals one day our family and friends will stand beside our grave and hear the words, *"Ashes to ashes and dust to dust."* But the symbolism of the ashes does not stop there, because just as in the ancient world ashes were used to cleanse in the absence of soap, and fields were burned to give opportunity for new life, so the promise of cleansing and new life come to us through the power and promise of Jesus Christ our Lord.