

*St. Luke Lutheran Church
1400 Market Street
Williamsport, PA 17701*



*Ash Wednesday
Wednesday, February 18, 2026
7:00PM*


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*On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.*  
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GATHERING

PRELUDE *Savior, When in Dust to Thee*, by Joseph Parry, setting by Sam Eatherton

Stand

GREETING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living 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 receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen**

WORD

Sit

FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming Day of the LORD, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

¹Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
 for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—
²a day of darkness and gloom,
 a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread upon the mountains
 a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
 nor will be again after them
 in ages to come.

¹²Yet even now, says the LORD,
 return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
 ¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the LORD, your God,
 for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
 and relents from punishing.
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;
 sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
 ¹⁶gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
 assemble the aged;
gather the children,

even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
Let them say, “Spare your people, O LORD,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples,
‘Where is their God?’ ”

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-17 (*read responsively*)

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your ¹steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out ¹my offenses.

²**Wash me through and through ¹from my wickedness,
and cleanse me ¹from my sin.**

³For I know ¹my offenses,
and my sin is ev- ¹er before me.

⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil ¹in your
sight; so you are justified when you speak and right ¹in your
judgment.**

⁵Indeed, I was born ¹steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my ¹mother’s womb.

⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth ¹deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom ¹deep within.**

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I ¹shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- ¹er than snow.

⁸**Let me hear ¹joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken ¹may rejoice.**

⁹Hide your face ¹from my sins,
and blot out ¹all my wickedness.

¹⁰**Create in me a clean ¹heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- ¹it within me.**

¹¹Cast me not away ¹from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spir- ¹it from me.

¹²**Restore to me the joy of ¹your salvation**

and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.

¹³Let me teach your ways | to offenders,
and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.

**¹⁴Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**

¹⁵O Lord, o- | pen my lips,
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.

**¹⁶For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.
You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**

¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

^{20b}We entreat 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.

^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute.

We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as -dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

P The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 6th chapter.

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

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

⁶But whenever 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.

¹⁶And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast,

put oil on your head and wash your face,

¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust

consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Silence for reflection may follow.

Stand

HYMN OF THE DAY green LBW 296 *Just as I Am, without One Plea*

INVITATION TO LENT

P Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent--self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love--strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

CONFESSION OF SIN

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P Most holy and merciful God,

**C we confess to you and to one another,
and before the whole company of heaven,
that we have sinned by our fault,
by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault,
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

P 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.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P We have shut our ears 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.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our past unfaithfulness,

the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives,
we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our self-indulgent appetites and ways,

and our exploitation of other people,

we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our negligence in prayer and worship,

and our failure to share the faith that is in us,

we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our neglect of human need and suffering,

and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our false judgments,
our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors,
and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,
we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our waste and pollution of your creation,
and our lack of concern for those who come after us,
we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

C Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

Sit

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*Those who desire to receive ashes come forward to the altar steps.
The ministers apply ashes to the forehead of each person with the
words:*

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

*After all who desire ashes have received them, the minister leads the
congregation in the conclusion of the confession.*

P Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

C that we may show forth your glory in the world.

P By the cross and Passion of your Son, our Lord,

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

P 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.

C Amen

Stand

THE PRAYERS

A Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

After each portion of the prayers:

A Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

The prayers conclude:

P Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

C Amen.

MEAL

THE PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

The ministers and congregation may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Peace be with you R Peace be with you

ANTHEM *Remember Me*, by Robert Lau

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A Gracious Provider,

**C you set your immense treasures among us,
opening your heart to the world.**

**As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love,
deepen our commitment to sharing those
treasures with others,
through our Savior, Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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 our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right. . .*(The preface appropriate to the day or season is said, concluding:)*. . .we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**C Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might:
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the
highest. Blessed is he who come in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

P Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P In the night...*(The pastor proclaims the Words of Institution, concluding:)*...*Do this for the remembrance of me.*

LORD'S PRAYER

**C Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Sit

COMMUNION

As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

The communicant may say: Amen

COMMUNION HYMN WOV 657 *The Glory of These Forty Days*

Stand

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A God of our salvation,
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.
Through the body and blood of your Son,
may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

P Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:
God, who calls all things into existence,
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,
and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,
✠ bless you now and always.

C Amen.

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C Thanks be to God!

SERVING TONIGHT

Assisting Minister: Marilyn Eshleman

Communion Helper: Becky Lewis

Lector: Cheryl Newburg

Live Stream Assistant: Brad Nason

Usher: Jere Eshleman

LENTEN HOLY WEEK & EASTER WORSHIP

Lenten Midweek Worship & Dinner:

Wednesdays during Lent 7:00PM

(February 25th; and March 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th)

preceded by dinner at 6:00PM

Sunday, March 29th: Passion /Palm Sunday 8:00AM & 10:30 AM

Thursday, April 2nd: Maundy Thursday 7:00PM

Friday, April 3rd: Good Friday 7:00PM

Sunday, April 5th: The Resurrection of Our Lord 8:00AM

(9:15AM Easter Breakfast in Bell Hall) and 10:30AM Worship Services

(*No Sunday School)

Lenten Midweek Services
Wednesdays, starting February 25th and ending March 25th
Soup Supper: 6:00 pm
Service: 7:00 pm

Join us this Lent for a time of fellowship and worship. We will be using the Taizé style of prayer for our services this year. Taizé prayer is a simple, meditative service of chant-like songs, Scripture reading, and spoken and silent prayer. This style of worship is named after the monastic community where it was founded.

There are two elements of Taizé which may be unusual for those who are new to the style: repetition and silence.

Repetition: Each song is repeated an indeterminate number of times. The intent is for the music to take the form of meditative prayer, with the lyrics and melody moving from the head to the heart. Aligning yourself with the rhythm of the music presents the opportunity to open yourself to the Holy Spirit.

Silence: A typical Taizé service involves a time of silence. If you aren't familiar with it, a time of silence during worship might seem awkward or confusing, but many who have become accustomed to it consider this to be the most significant part. During the silence, you may want to reflect on the evening's songs or Scripture, listen for God to speak, or simply rest in God's presence.

In the words of Brother Roger, the founder of the Taizé community:
“Nothing is more conducive to a communion with the living God than a meditative common prayer with, as it's high point, singing that never ends and that continues in the silence of one's heart when one is alone again.”

We hope you'll join us starting next week!

STAFF AT ST. LUKE



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REMINDERS: Office hours – M - F 9:00AM-1:00PM

Bulletin **deadline** – WEDNESDAY 9:00AM

Spectrum **deadline** – **15th of each month**

Council Pack **deadline** – FRIDAY 9:00AM before Mtg

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