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**Ash Wednesday**

**St. John’s Passion**

“O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfector 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.” *Gradual for Lent*

**AS WE GATHER**

From earliest days the Christian Church employed the weeks before Easter—what came to be called the season of Lent—as the time of the year to prepare candidates for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the catechumenate. Paul wrote, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3–4). Baptism involves death, burial, and resurrection. During Lent, we discover that Jesus is not the only one who suffers, dies, and rises again. Our midweek Lenten services prepare us to consider our identity and connection with the Passion of Christ as the baptized children of God. We do so through the eyes of the Holy Evangelist, Saint John, as we hear, in John 18–19, of Jesus’ betrayal and arrest, Jesus facing Annas and Caiaphas, Jesus before Pilate, Jesus delivered, Jesus crucified, and Jesus’ death and burial. Look for this Lenten season to provide a deeper understanding of your Baptism into the passion and death of Christ, with the result as Paul describes it: we are “always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies” (2 Corinthians 4:10).

**+ PREPARATION +**

**IMPOSITION OF ASHES** *Psalm 69:16–18; Psalm 51:7*

Pastor: Answer me, O Lord, for Your steadfast love is good;  
according to Your abundant mercy, turn to me.

**People: Hide not Your face from Your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me. Draw near to my soul, redeem me;  
ransom me because of my enemies!**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And with your spirit.**

Pastor: Let us pray. 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.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

*The people come forward to receive the ashes as the pastor repeats Genesis 3:19 over each penitent: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*

Pastor: Let us pray. Grant, O Lord, that we who with prayer and fasting have put on the armor of our Christian warfare may be defended against all spiritual wickedness and, at the last, obtain the victory, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**INVOCATION, CONFESSION and ABSOLUTION**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God, our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

*A period of silence is kept for self-examination.*

Pastor: O almighty God, merciful Father,

**People: I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

Pastor: Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

**+ WORD +**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Pastor: 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.

**People: Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** Joel 2:12–19

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**GRADUAL** *Hebrews 12:2*

Pastor: O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus,  
the founder and perfecter of our faith,

**People: 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

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL** John 18:1–11

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**HYMN OF THE DAY** “On My Heart Imprint Your Image” (*LSB* 422)

**SERMON *“The Powerless ‘I Am’”***

**NICENE CREED**

**People: 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**

Pastor: Let us pray. As we begin our journey through this season of repentance and renewal, let us return to the Lord, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. O God, You call us to turn from sin and to live in the joy and freedom of the forgiveness earned through the merits of Jesus Christ. Give us strength to persevere on our Lenten journey. Lord, in Your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

Pastor: O God, You call people everywhere to work in harmony for the good of all humanity. Empower the leaders of the nations to be peacemakers. Lord, in Your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

Pastor: O God, grant compassion to all who minister to the sick and infirm: medical professionals, healing practitioners, and all caregivers. Show Your mercy to those who are ill, [*especially* . . .] and bring them peace of mind and heart. Lord, in Your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

Pastor: O God, You call us to turn from our sin and to live for You alone. Guide us through these forty days of Lent to a fuller appreciation of Your baptismal grace. Lord, in Your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Merciful God, hear our cry when we call to You; renew and uphold us with Your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**People: Amen.**

**OFFERING**

**+ SACRAMENT +**

**Divine Service and the Close Fellowship of Holy Communion**

*Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise. The gifts include the Holy Supper in which we receive His true body and blood to eat and drink. Those welcome to the table acknowledge the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, confess their own sinfulness, and in true faith wish to receive the forgiveness and strength promised through this Holy Sacrament, as* ***instructed*** *… and* ***in unity of faith*** *… with God’s people here in this congregation. It is our sincerest desire that you join in the intimacy of this fellowship. However, if you are not, yet, an instructed and confirmed member-in-good-standing of a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, please visit with the pastor about such a fellowship before communing. If you wish to come forward for a blessing, you are welcome to join us at the rail to receive such. Please cross your arms in front of you to indicate that desire.*

**PREFACE** *2 Timothy 4:22*

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

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

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

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

**PROPER PREFACE**

Pastor: It is truly good, 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 accomplished the salvation of mankind by the tree of the cross that, where death arose, there life also might rise again and that the serpent who overcame by the tree of the garden might likewise by the tree of the cross be overcome. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.  
  
Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**THE WORDS OF OUR LORD** *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

**PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST***1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

**People: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Pastor: O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**LORD’S PRAYER** *Matthew 6:9–13*

**PAX DOMINI**

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

**People: Amen.**

**DISTRIBUTION HYMNS**

“What Wondrous Love Is This” (*LSB* 543)

“Baptized into Your Name Most Holy” (*LSB* 590)

**POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, friend of sinners and our light and hope, we give thanks to You for enfolding us in Your mercy and grace this day. Help us by our Baptism into Your death to rise and live Your new life now and in the life to come where You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**BENEDICTION** *Numbers 6:24–26*

**HYMN** “Just as I Am, without One Plea” (*LSB* 570)

**MIDWEEK LENTEN SERIES CONTINUES**

* **Lenten Midweek 2 (Feb. 21): “Two Interrogations”, John 18:12-27**
* **Lenten Midweek 3 (Feb. 28): “What Kind of King Is This?”, John 18:28-40**
* **Lenten Midweek 4 (March 6): “Whom Do We Follow?”, John 19:1-16a**
* **Lenten Midweek 5 (March 13): “Wisdom Has a Friend on the Cross”, John 19:16b-27**
* **Lenten Midweek 6 (March 29): “Jesus Finishes the Battle for Your Salvation”, John 19:28-42**

**Services begin at 7:00 pm, but come early (at 6)**

**and support the Youth Group serving dinners for**

**just a “free will offering” supporting their summer trip.**

**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH,**

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**All are welcome …**

**… Christ is honored.**