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**Ash**

**Wednesday**

**Four Significant Days …**

**a Series**

**AS WE GATHER**

As we enter the Lenten season, we encounter a significant problem: we have fallen into sin just as Adam and Eve did, which means we are banished from the Garden of Eden just as they were. The wages of sin is death, and without access to the tree of life, we are all doomed to die. We are dust, and to dust we shall return. Yet, in Jesus, we find that we are not doomed to dust forever, but Jesus will raise us from the dead to join Him in a new Eden, a new paradise forever.

**Psalm** 50:1-6

**+ PREPARATION +**

**INVOCATION and OPENING SENTENCES** *Joel 2:12–13*

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

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: “Yet even now,” declares the Lord,

**People: “return to Me with all your heart,**

Pastor: with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

**People: and rend your hearts and not your garments.”**

Pastor: Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,

**People: slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;**

Pastor: and He relents over disaster.

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

On my heart imprint Your image, blessed Jesus, King of grace,

that life’s riches, cares and pleasures never may Your work erase;

let the clear inscription be: Jesus, crucified for me,

is my life, my hope’s foundation, and my glory and salvation!

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION** *Psalm 51:1–12; 103:8, 10–14*

Pastor: We come, confessing our sins, and relying on God’s mercy and steadfast love. Together we confess in the words of Psalm 51:

**People: Have mercy on me, O God,  
 according to Your steadfast love;  
according to Your abundant mercy  
 blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
 and cleanse me from my sin!  
For I know my transgressions,  
 and my sin is ever before me.  
Against You, You only, have I sinned  
 and done what is evil in Your sight,  
so that You may be justified in Your words  
 and blameless in Your judgment.  
Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
 and in sin did my mother conceive me.  
Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being,  
 and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart.  
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
 wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and gladness;  
 let the bones that You have broken rejoice.  
Hide Your face from my sins,  
 and blot out all my iniquities.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
 and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from Your presence,  
 and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
 and uphold me with a willing spirit.**

Pastor: Hear these words from Psalm 103, “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**People: He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.**

Pastor: For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him.” This steadfast love was shown most clearly in Jesus’ death and resurrection for our forgiveness, life, and salvation. 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.

**People: Amen. “As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.**

Pastor: As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him.

**People: For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”**

**IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

*The congregation is invited forward to receive ashes placed in the sign of the cross upon their forehead. These words, first spoken by God to Adam, will be spoken as the ashes are imposed:*

Pastor: You are dust, and to dust you shall return.

**IMPOSITION HYMN** *“Chief of Sinners Though I Be”* (*LSB* 611)

Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed His blood for me,

died that I might live on high, lives that I might never die.

As the branch is to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.

Oh, the height of Jesus’ love, higher than the heav’ns above,

deeper than the depths of sea, lasting as eternity!

Love that found me—wondrous thought! Found me when I sought Him not.

Only Jesus can impart balm to heal the wounded heart,

peace that flows from sin forgiv’n, joy that lifts the soul to heav’n,

faith and hope to walk with God in the way that Enoch trod.

Chief of sinners though I be, Christ is all in all to me;

all my wants to Him are known, all my sorrows are His own.

He sustains the hidden life safe with Him from earthly strife.

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 OF THE DAY**

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, You created us in Your holy image, but through our continuous sin, we have been poor reflections of You. Strengthen us throughout this season to put away sin and selfish ambition, so that we may journey toward the cross and empty tomb with all humility and patience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +**

**OLD TESTAMENT** Genesis 3:1-24

Reader: O Lord, have mercy on us.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**EPISTLE** 1 Corinthians 15:45-58

Reader: O Lord, have mercy on us.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL** Mark 6:7-13

Reader: O Lord, have mercy on us.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**RESPONSORY**

Pastor: Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.

**People: Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**

Pastor: In You, O Lord, do I put my trust, leave me not, O Lord, my God.

**People: Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**

Pastor: Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.

**People: Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**

**SERMON *“Significant Problem—Last Day in the Garden”***

# THE NICENE CREED *(LSB*,back inside cover)

**+ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT +**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION and LORD’S PRAYER**

**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.*

**WORDS OF OUR LORD and LORD’S PRAYER**

**DISTRIBUTION**

*“Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing”* (*LSB* 421)

Jesus, grant that balm and healing in Your holy wounds I find,

ev’ry hour that I am feeling pains of body and of mind.

Should some evil thought within tempt my treach’rous heart to sin,

show the peril, and from sinning keep me from its first beginning.

Should some lust or sharp temptation fascinate my sinful mind,

draw me to Your cross and passion, and new courage I shall find.

Or should Satan press me hard, let me then be on my guard,

saying, “Christ for me was wounded,” that the tempter flee confounded.

If the world my heart entices with the broad and easy road,

with seductive, sinful vices, let me weigh the awful load

You were willing to endure. Help me flee all thoughts impure

and to master each temptation, calm in prayer and meditation.

Ev’ry wound that pains or grieves me by Your wounds, Lord, is made whole;

when I’m faint, Your cross revives me, granting new life to my soul.

Yes, Your comfort renders sweet ev’ry bitter cup I meet;

for Your all-atoning passion has procured my soul’s salvation.

O my God, my rock and tower, grant that in Your death I trust,

knowing death has lost its power since You crushed it in the dust.

Savior, let Your agony ever help and comfort me;

when I die be my protection, light and life and resurrection.

### BENEDICTION

**HYMN** *“Not All the Blood of Beasts”* (*LSB* 431)

Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain

could give the guilty conscience peace or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heav’nly Lamb, takes all our sins away;

a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they.

My faith would lay its hand on that dear head of Thine,

while as a penitent I stand, and there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see the burden Thou didst bear

when hanging on the cursèd tree; I know my guilt was there.

Believing, we rejoice to see the curse remove;

we bless the Lamb with cheerful voice and sing His bleeding love.

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**All are welcome …**

**… Christ is honored.**