



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



Ash Wednesday

March 5, 2025

7:00 Holy Communion

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.

-from Sundays and Seasons 2025

Welcome to worship today!

If you are visiting with us we invite you to sign the Guest Book in the back of the sanctuary.

† GATHERING †

Greeting

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

A: 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.

Preparing the Altar for Lent

† WORD †

First Reading Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

B: Blow 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?'"

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Poetry Psalm 51 (*read together*)

**C: Have mercy, tender God,
forget that I defied you.**

**Wash away my sin,
cleansing me from my guilt.**

**I know my evil well,
it stares me in the face,**

**evil done to you alone
before your very eyes.**

**How right your condemnation!
Your verdict clearly just.**

**You see me for what I am,
a sinner before my birth.**

**You love those centered in truth;
teach me your hidden wisdom.**

**Wash me with fresh water,
wash me bright as snow.**

**Fill me with happy songs,
let the bones you bruised now dance.**

Shut your eyes to my sin,

**make my shame disappear.
Creator, reshape my heart,
God, steady my spirit.
Do not cast me aside
stripped of your holy spirit.
Save me, bring back my joy,
support me, strengthen my will.
Then I will teach your way
and sinners will turn to you.
Help me, stop my tears,
and I will sing your goodness.
Lord, give me words
and I will shout your praise.**

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 5:20b -6:10

D: 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.

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.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation (Joel 2:13)

C: Return to the Lord your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Gospel Reading Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The gospel is announced:

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

C: Glory to you O Lord.

[Jesus taught] “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. ²“So 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.

⁵“And 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.

¹⁶“And 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.

¹⁹“Do 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.

After the reading:

P: The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus
(for music, please turn to Hymn 802 in the Red Hymnal)

**1. Let us ever walk with Jesus,
follow his example pure,
through a world that would deceive us
and to sin our spirits lure.**

**Onward in his footsteps treading,
trav'lers here, our home above,
full of faith and hope and love,
let us do our Savior's bidding.
Faithful Lord, with me abide;
I shall follow where you guide.**

- 2. Let us suffer here with Jesus,
and with patience bear our cross.
Joy will follow all our sadness;
where he is there is no loss.
Though today we sow no laughter,
we shall reap celestial joy;
All discomforts that annoy
shall give way to mirth here after.
Jesus, here I share your woe;
help me there your joy to know.**
- 3. Let us gladly die with Jesus.
Since by death he conquered death,
he will free us from destruction,
give to us immortal breath.
Let us mortify all passion
that would lead us into sin;
and the grave that shuts us in
shall but prove the gate of heaven.
Jesus, here with you I die,
there to live with you on high.**
- 4. Let us also live with Jesus.
He has risen from the dead
that to life we may awaken,
Jesus, you are now our head,
we are your own living members;
where you live, there we shall be
in your presence constantly,
living there with you forever.
Jesus, let me faithful be;
life eternal grant to me.**

Invitation to Lent

A: 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.

B: 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.

P: 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 gift 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 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,
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done
and by what we have left undone.**

A: 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.

B: 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.

D: Our past unfaithfulness, our pride, envy, hypocrisy and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

A: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

B: 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.

D: 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.

A: 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.

B: 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.

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

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

Imposition of Ashes

P: Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen

(Those who wish to receive ashes are invited to come to the altar by the center aisle. Please return to your seats by the side aisle.)

P: Accomplish in us, O God, the word of your salvation,

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

P: By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

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

P: Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

C: Amen.

Prayer of Intercession

“Chipped, Flawed, Worse for Wear” from *Holy Wistful Wanderings* by the Rev. John S. Macholz, retired bishop, Upstate New York Synod

Peace

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

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share that peace with one another.

The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

† MEAL †

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray: Extravagant God,

C: you have blessed us with the fullness of creation.

Now we gather at your feast

where you offer us the food that satisfies.

Take and use what we offer here, come among us,

and feed us with the body and blood of Christ,

in whose name we pray.

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, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join in their unending hymn:

(spoken)

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 comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

P: In the night in which he was handed over our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take and eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**C: 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.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

Invitation to Communion

P: Here is food and drink for the journey.
Take and be filled.

Communion Distribution

Welcome to the Lord's Supper! All who are baptized are invited to receive communion. Please pick up a communion glass as you come forward to the altar. You will receive bread from the communion assistant. (If you need a gluten free wafer please tell the assistant.) The pastor will pour wine into your glass. If you prefer grape juice, it is pre-filled in the individual glasses.

Communion Blessing After all have communed the pastor will say:

P: The body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

D: Let us pray:

Blessed Jesus,
in this rich meal of grace,
you have fed us with your body, the bread of life.
Now send us forth to bear your life-giving hope
to a world in need.

C: Amen.

‡ SENDING ‡

Blessing

P: Now is the acceptable time.
Now is the day of salvation.
Holy God,
speaking, spoken, and inspiring,
bless you, unbind you,
and send you in love and in peace.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn The Glory of These Forty Days
(For music see Hymn 320 in the Red Hymnal)

- 1. The glory of these forty days
we celebrate with songs of praise;
for Christ, through whom all things were made,
himself has fasted and has prayed.**
- 2. Alone and fasting Moses saw
the loving God who gave the law;
and to Elijah, fasting, came
the steeds and chariots of flame.**
- 3. So Daniel trained his mystic sight,
delivered from the lions' might;
and John, the Bridegroom's friend became**

the herald of Messiah's name.

- 4. Then grant, O God, that we may, too,
return in fast and prayer to you.
Our spirits strengthen with your grace,
and give us joy to see your face.**

Text: Latin hymn, 11th century.; tr. Maurice F. Bell, 1862-1947, alt., copyright Oxford University Press Music: J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543

Dismissal

P: Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness;
be of good courage;
hold fast to that which is good;
render no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honor all people;
love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
C: God's Work. Our Hands.

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St. John's Lutheran Church
888 County Road 9, Victor, NY 14564
stjohnsvictor.com (585) 924-5192
The Rev. Jonathan Deibler, Pastor
William Shi, Pianist