

A stylized graphic of a flame, rendered in shades of yellow, orange, and red, set against a dark red, textured background. The flame is composed of several pointed, overlapping shapes that create a sense of movement and heat. The overall composition is vertical and centered.

ASH WEDNESDAY

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
ASH WEDNESDAY
Wednesday, February 18, 2025

ASH WEDNESDAY

Welcome to all who are attending our service today. We are glad you are with us! To all guests and visitors, we especially extend our hands of friendship. May God bless the worship time for each one of you. Please come again!

NURSERY AVAILABLE We have an unstaffed nursery for your convenience and privacy. The nursery has audio and video so you may hear and see the worship service while attending to your child.

Holy Communion is celebrated at the 8:30 service on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, and at the 11:00 service on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

For those wishing to commune at the Lords Table: The Lutheran practice of close Communion attempts to prevent a person from eating and drinking judgment on himself (1 Corinthians 11:23–30). Thus, attendance at the Lords Supper implies a four-level commitment to Christ. We believe that communicants must: (1) be baptized Christians; (2) accept the real presence of Christs body in the bread and His blood in the wine; (3) confess and repent of ones sins and trust that God offers complete forgiveness of those sins in this Sacrament; and (4) share oneness of faith, doctrine and practice among those who commune. Those wishing to commune with us today who have not done so previously, please see the pastor or an elder before the service begins. (*Grape juice is available for those who do not drink alcohol, and gluten-free wafers are available on the cup return table.*)

+ PREPARATION +

AS WE GATHER: The season of the Church Year that starts with Ash Wednesday is known by differing terms in various nations. The official term that dates back to the sixth century AD is Quadragesima, from the Latin word for “fortieth.” This term is carried forward in Latin-based languages such as Spanish (*cuaresma*) and Italian (*Quaresima*). Central Europeans reflect the self-denial aspect of the Lenten time using the term *Fastenzeit* (fasting time) in Germany and *Nagy-bost* (great fast) in Hungary. That naming tradition is also kept in Arabic-speaking countries, where the term *Sawm al-Kabir* (big fast) is used. Northern Europeans and related countries refer to the season of the year, relating back to the old Anglo-Saxon word *Lengten-tide* (springtime), which described when the days lengthened light-wise. Although the terms for the forty days of Lent may differ, the spiritual importance of “the forty” remains constant and powerful. May keeping this time of penance and prayer with “sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:8) lead us to observe a blessed and holy Lent!

PRELUDE

(7:00pm) “Lenten Prayer”

Music by Susan T. Nelson

Handbell Choir

WELCOME

INVOCATION

- P** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

ADDRESS

- P** Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

+ IMPOSITION OF ASHES +

- P** On Ash Wednesday, many congregations practice the imposition of ashes. But why? The imposition of ashes can be a powerful, tactile reminder of both Law and Gospel in which worshipers of any age can take part. Many times, the words “dust you are, and to dust you shall return” are spoken as ashes are received on the forehead. These words remind us that as a result of sin and the fall, death is a reality.

Ashes also call to mind the practice in Scripture of wearing sackcloth and ashes as a sign of sorrow and repentance of sin. Typically, however, the ashes are marked in the shape of the cross, pointing us to the promise of forgiveness of sin through Jesus’ crucifixion for us. After leaving worship, we will each eventually wash off the ashen cross. As we splash water on our foreheads, we remember our Baptism, where we were cleansed of sin through water and the Word. Whether literally marked with ashes or not, we all enter this penitential season of Lent praying that God Almighty would have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

(Worshippers who desire to receive ashes come forward at this time and stand before the pastor. The pastor applies the ashes in the shape of the cross to the forehead or hand while saying to each person, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.")

+ MUSIC DURING THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES +

Psalm 51 (sung by cantors)

- ¹Have mercy on me, O God,
according to Your | steadfast love;*
according to Your abundant mercy
blot out my trans- | gressions.
- ²Wash me thoroughly from my in- | iquity,*
and cleanse me | from my sin!
- ³For I know my trans- | gressions,*
and my sin is ever be- | fore me.
- ⁴Against 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.
- ⁵Behold, I was brought forth in in- | iquity,*
and in sin did my mother con- | ceive me.
- ⁶Behold, You delight in truth in the inward | being,*
and You teach me wisdom in the | secret heart.
- ⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;*
wash me, and I shall be whit- | er than snow.
- ⁸Let me hear joy and | gladness;*
let the bones that You have bro- | ken rejoice.
- ⁹Hide Your face | from my sins,*
and blot out all my in- | iquities.
- ¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, | O God,*
and renew a right spirit with- | in me.
- ¹¹Cast me not away from Your | presence,*
and take not Your Holy Spirit | from me.
- ¹²Restore to me the joy of Your sal- | vation,*
and uphold me with a willing | spirit.
- ¹³Then I will teach transgressors | Your ways,*
and sinners will re- | turn to You.
- ¹⁴Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
O God of my sal- | vation,*
and my tongue will sing aloud of Your | righteousness.

¹⁵O Lord, open | my lips,*
 and my mouth will de- | clare Your praise.
¹⁶For You will not delight in sacrifice, or I would | give it;*
 You will not be pleased with a burnt | offering.
¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken | spirit;*
 a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will | not despise.
¹⁸Do good to Zion in your good | pleasure;*
 build up the walls of Je- | rusalem;
¹⁹then will You delight in right sacrifices,
 in burnt offerings and whole burnt | offerings;*
 then bulls will be offered on Your | altar.
*Glory be to the Father and | to the Son**
and to the Holy | Spirit;
*as it was in the be- | ginning,**
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.
¹Have mercy on me, O God,
 according to Your | steadfast love;*
 according to Your abundant mercy
 blot out my trans- | gressions.

“O Thou That Hear’st When Sinners Cry”

(tune: When I Survey The Wondrous Cross)

O Thou that hear’st when sinners cry
 Though all my crimes before Thee lie,
 Behold them not with angry look,
 But blot their mem’ry from Thy book.

Create my nature pure within
 And form my soul averse to sin;
 Let Thy good Spirit ne’er depart
 Nor hide Thy presence from my heart.

I cannot live without Thy light,
 Cast out and banished from Thy sight;
 Thy holy joys, my God, restore
 And guard me that I fall no more.

Though I have grieved Thy Spirit, Lord,
 His help and comfort still afford
 And let me now come near Thy throne
 To plead the merits of Thy Son.

A broken heart, my God, my King,
Is all the sacrifice I bring.
Look down, O Lord, with pitying eye
And save the soul condemned to die.

Oh, may Thy love inspire my tongue!
Salvation shall be all my song;
And all my pow'rs shall join to bless
The Lord, my Strength and Righteousness.

(kneel as you are able, or sit)

CONFESSION

P Let us humbly go to God, confessing our sins.

Almighty, eternal, loving Father,

C we confess to You and one another not only that we have sinned in our thoughts, words, and actions but that each failing has been a symptom of our sinful condition.

We have tried to overlook our faults but realize the truth of our failings. We have tried to do better by our own strength but have fallen back into sin again. We are helpless to change by ourselves.

P Dear Lord, like our spiritual ancestor David, whose words You inspired in the Psalms, we too are guilty of sin:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love;
according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

C Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

P Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight,

C so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment.

P Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

C Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being, and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

- P** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
C wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- P** Let me hear joy and gladness;
C let the bones that You have broken rejoice.
- P** Hide Your face from my sins,
C and blot out all my iniquities.
- P** Let us go to our gracious God, asking for mercy.
C We are not the people You would have us be; we are not what we had hoped for; we throw ourselves on the mercy of Your holy court, asking Your forgiveness and renewal of life for the sake of our Savior, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ABSOLUTION

- P** God does not desire the death of sinners, but that they may live forgiven in His presence. He sent His Son, our Lord Jesus, to take our sins upon Himself and then to rise in our place, drawing people of faith to His eternal realm. In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

SALUTATION

- P** The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P** Let us pray.
 Gracious and merciful God, You forgive the sins of all who come to You with penitent and contrite hearts. Grant us the spirit of true repentance to acknowledge our sins and to find in You forgiveness and restoration, wholeness, and peace; through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Redeemer.
- C** Amen.

(sit)

¹² “Yet even now,” declares the LORD,
 “return to Me with all your heart,
 with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³ and rend your hearts and not your garments.”

Return to the LORD your God,
 for He is gracious and merciful,
 slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;
 and He relents over disaster.

¹⁴ Who 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?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 consecrate a fast;
 call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶ gather the people.

Consecrate the congregation;
 assemble the elders;
 gather the children,
 even nursing infants.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
 and the bride her chamber.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
 let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep
 and say, “Spare Your people, O LORD,
 and make not Your heritage a reproach,
 a byword among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples,
 ‘Where is their God?’”

¹⁸ Then the LORD became jealous for His land
 and had pity on His people.

¹⁹ The LORD answered and said to His people,
 “Behold, I am sending to you
 grain, wine, and oil,
 and you will be satisfied;
 and I will no more make you
 a reproach among the nations.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:2 (ESV)

^{20b} We implore 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.

¹Working together with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For He says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 18:9-14 (ESV)

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the eighteenth chapter.

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

⁹[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

“Dust to Dust”

(tune: Take My Life and Let It Be)

Dust to dust, my whole life framed—
Earth to earth, my flesh reclaimed—
Till the Lord who has no bound
Breathed His last, lay in the ground.

Dust to dust, all that I know—
Grace on grace, God will bestow—
Life incarnate died for me,
Rose again to set me free.

Dust to dust: my sin and shame—
Buried in my Savior's name.
When He comes, I will arise,
See my Lord with my own eyes.

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"Dust to Dust", Wesley, 1703–91, alt., Text: Public domain

SERMON **"THE RIGHT PLACE"**

Pr. Jim Sprengle
Luke 18:9-14

"We Keep Again This Solemn Fast" (vv. 1-3) (tune: Lord, Keep Us Steadfast In Your Word)

1 We keep again this solemn fast
And stand with those of ages past;
These forty days of Lent we strive
To live in faith and practice love.

2 The law and prophets call again
To live by faith and die to sin;
With Christ as Savior and our guide,
May we be daily sanctified.

3 In faith and deep humility
May we more Christlike ever be;
Awake, asleep, at work and home
Guard lips and lives for Christ alone.

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

(During the midweek services of Lent, a basket is located in the center aisle to give your offering when you arrive or depart.)

(7:00pm) “I Take The Cross”

Words by R.G. Huff, music by J. Rouse

Ascension Choir

*I take the cross of Jesus Christ in ashes on my face.
This ancient symbol made in dust reminds me of His grace.
I beg for mercy from my Lord, to cleanse me deep within.
I know myself, my faulty life, my tendency toward sin.*

*O cross of ashes, speak again in ways I understand;
Speak forth repentance, let me know forgiveness from Your hand.
Have mercy on us Lord, we pray;
Look deep within and find our hearts made whole,
Our thoughts make pure, our eyes no longer blind.*

*This cross of ashes on my brow reminds me life is brief.
From dust I came, to dust I go through sorrow, pain and grief.
These forty days are set aside for those who share the call
To take the cross, deny themselves and give to Christ their all.
I take my cross, deny myself and give to Christ my all.*

LITANY

- P** O Lord,
C have mercy.
- P** O Christ,
C have mercy.
- P** O Lord,
C have mercy.
- P** O Christ,
C hear us.
- P** God the Father in heaven,
C have mercy.
- P** God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
C have mercy.
- P** God the Holy Spirit,
C have mercy.
- P** Be gracious to us.
C Spare us, good Lord.

P Be gracious to us.

C **Help us, good Lord.**

P By the mystery of Your holy incarnation;
by Your holy nativity;
by Your baptism, fasting, and temptation;
by Your agony and bloody sweat;
by Your cross and passion;
by Your precious death and burial;
by Your glorious resurrection and ascension;
and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

C **Help us, good Lord.**

P In all time of our tribulation;
in all time of our prosperity;
in the hour of death;
and in the day of judgment:

C **Help us, good Lord.**

P We poor sinners implore You

C **to hear us, O Lord.**

P To prosper the preaching of Your Word;
to bless our prayer and meditation;
to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith;
and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P 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.

C **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

CLOSING PRAYER

P Let us pray.

O Lord, grant us a sincere faith that lives within our hearts. Preserve us by Your grace that we may pray with renewed confidence, bear witness with renewed hope, and live with renewed joy the holy and obedient life for which we were born again in our Baptism into Christ. Keep us these forty days of Lent and bring us at last to the perfect consummation and peace of heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

BENEDICTION

P God Almighty—the Father, who sent His Son down for you; the Son, who obeyed that you might rise up to be with Him forever; and the Holy Spirit, who has bestowed faith on you to trust all that has been done for you—bless and keep you this Lent and forever.

C Amen.

“We Keep Again This Solemn Fast” (vv. 4-7)

(tune: Lord, Keep Us Steadfast In Your Word)

- 4 In Word and prayer let us be found,
That faith and works in us abound;
Let penitence mark every day
That we avoid the sinful way.
- 5 Pour out on us from Your great love
Your grace and mercy from above;
That frail and weak though we may be,
Still Your own handiwork are we.

6 Forgive the sin that we have done,
Make us grow up in Christ, Your Son;
Until, at last, our days pass by
And we shall dwell with You on high.

7 O blessed Holy Trinity,
One God, eternal Unity;
May thus our Lenten forty days
Prepare us for eternal praise.

"We Keep Again This Solemn Fast", Text: attr. Gregory the Great, ca. 540–604, tr. Larry A. Peters © 2025 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

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Ascension Lutheran Church

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Office Phone: 503-665-8821 · Web Site: www.alcportland.org
Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday 9am to 3pm

Our Mission Statement:

~Go and Share Jesus Christ~

Our Vision Statement:

“Take part...Join Jesus on His mission.”

The members of Ascension Lutheran Church are committed to being God’s witnesses in Gresham, and in all of Portland and the Northwest, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8):

With the universal Christian Church, we believe, teach and respond to the love of the Triune God— the Father, Creator of all that exists; the Son Jesus Christ, Who left His home in Heaven to become flesh and blood, to suffer and die for the sins of all peoples of the world, and Who rose from the grave, victorious over sin, death and the devil, that we too might live with Him in Heaven; and the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts in Christ Jesus through God’s Word and Sacrament. The three Persons of the Holy Trinity are one God, co-equal and co-eternal. The core teachings of our faith from the Lutheran perspective can be summarized in three short phrases: Grace alone, Scripture alone, Faith alone.

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