



Ash Wednesday



February 14, 2024

6:30 pm

Ash Wednesday is a solemn day of prayer that begins the season of Lent. On this day we confess our sin in a litany of repentance. During Lent's forty days we are invited to carry out the Lenten discipline, practices of fasting, prayer, and works of love, even as we accompany people around the world who are preparing for baptism at Easter. On this day we may receive the sign of ashes. This ancient symbol of repentance reminds us of our mortality. Returning to God's mercy and grace, marked with the cross of Christ, we make our way through Lent, longing for the baptismal waters of Easter, our spiritual rebirth.

The congregation gathers in silence

Welcome/Announcements

Gathering

Psalm 51 (*We will read responsively*)

¹ Have mercy on me, God, according to your faithful love!

Wipe away my wrongdoings according to your great compassion!

² **Wash me completely clean of my guilt;
purify me from my sin!**

³ Because I know my wrongdoings,
my sin is always right in front of me.

⁴ **I've sinned against you—you alone.
I've committed evil in your sight.**

**That's why you are justified when you render your verdict,
completely correct when you issue your judgment.**

⁵ Yes, I was born in guilt, in sin,
from the moment my mother conceived me.

⁶ **And yes, you want truth in the most hidden places;
you teach me wisdom in the most secret space.**^[a]

⁷ Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean;
wash me and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ **Let me hear joy and celebration again;
let the bones you crushed rejoice once more.**

⁹ Hide your face from my sins;
wipe away all my guilty deeds!

¹⁰ **Create a clean heart for me, God;
put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!**

¹¹ Please don't throw me out of your presence;
please don't take your holy spirit away from me.

¹² **Return the joy of your salvation to me
and sustain me with a willing spirit.**

- ¹³ Then I will teach wrongdoers your ways,
and sinners will come back to you.
- ¹⁴ **Deliver me from violence, God, God of my salvation,
so that my tongue can sing of your righteousness.**
- ¹⁵ Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.
- ¹⁶ **You don't want sacrifices.
If I gave an entirely burned offering,
you wouldn't be pleased.**
- ¹⁷ A broken spirit is my sacrifice, God.^[b]
You won't despise a heart, God, that is broken and crushed.
- ¹⁸ **Do good things for Zion by your favor.
Rebuild Jerusalem's walls.**
- ¹⁹ Then you will again want sacrifices of righteousness—
entirely burned offerings and complete offerings.
Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

Greeting

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

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 declares that God is gracious and asks God to spare the people lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

- ¹ 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} a 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?'"

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.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, Lord, your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Alleluia (Joel 2:13)

The Holy Gospel according to the book of 1 Corinthians, beginning with the thirteenth chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel: First Corinthians 13

¹ If I speak in tongues of human beings and of angels but I don't have love, I'm a clanging gong or a clashing cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and I know all the mysteries and everything else, and if I have such complete faith that I can move mountains but I don't have love, I'm nothing. ³ If I give away everything that I have and hand over my own body to feel good about what I've done but I don't have love, I receive no benefit whatsoever.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant, ⁵ it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints, ⁶ it isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. ⁷ Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never fails. As for prophecies, they will be brought to an end. As for tongues, they will stop. As for knowledge, it will be brought to an end. ⁹ We know in part and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, what is partial will be brought to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, reason like a child, think like a child. But now that I have become a man, I've put an end to childish things. ¹² Now we see a reflection in a mirror; then we will see face-to-face. Now I know partially, but then I will know completely in the same way that I have been completely known. ¹³ Now faith, hope, and love remain—these three things—and the greatest of these is love.

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day ELW #661 "I Love To Tell The Story"

Invitation to Lent

Distribution of The Ashes

Imposition of Ashes

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. **Amen.**

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

(Place the symbol of the cross on the forehead)

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
that we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

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.
Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Thanksgiving at the Table

Lord's Prayer

**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

Christ has prepared the feast. Come to the table where all are welcomed home.

Distribution

Communion Blessing and Prayer

**Tender and merciful one, at your feast, you fed us who brought nothing,
turning our emptiness into joy. Filled with your abundant grace, send us now to
be ministers of reconciliation, mending broken hearts, working for justice, and
striving for peace among all people, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Sending Hymn ELW #606 "Our Father, We Have Wandered"

Benediction:

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; Be of good courage; Hold fast to that which is good; Render to 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

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Calvary Lutheran Church
19216 Rapidan Avenue
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

Pastor David Reedstrom
Ministers: All Members

Church Phone: 507-278-3317
E-mail: office@calvaryrapidan.org
Website: calvaryrapidan.org
Facebook: Calvary Lutheran Rapidan

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