

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda, NY
February 14, 2024**



Marked. During this special service for the beginning of our Lenten journey, we will be marked—marked with ashes. These ashes stand as a stark reminder of the dust of death, which is the wages of sin—Adam’s sin, the world’s sin, and our personal sin. But notice the shape in which the ashes are applied to our foreheads: the shape of the cross. “Remember that you are dust,” we hear. Powerful words, yes. But may we also have ears to hear the words even more powerful: “Your sins are forgiven!” The Gospel assures us that we have been marked and redeemed by Christ, the Crucified. The One who entered into our world to shape our dust and breathe new life into our death is the One who has named us and claimed us to be His own. He took on the ashes of our death. He became sin for us, “so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

PREPERATION

LSB 435 Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

PSALM

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

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.

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.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

The pastor provides a word of explanation and instruction for the imposition of ashes according to the congregation's custom. The pastor may apply ashes to the forehead of each worshiper while speaking to them the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

The ashes of our sin remind us of the curse of death and our need for Your redemption.

For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us and renew us. Mark us with Your cross and take our sins from us. Help us to delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God in His mercy delivered His Son over to the death of the cross to bear the burden of our brokenness, becoming sin for us "so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The ashes of your sin have been taken away and you have been marked and redeemed by Christ, the Crucified. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

✠ WORD ✠

KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

SALUTATION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who come to You in repentance and faith.

Cleanse us from the ashes of our sin that we may hold fast to the promise that we have been marked and redeemed by the Christ, the Crucified,

who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading Joel 2:12–19

¹²“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³and 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. 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; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶gather 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. ¹⁷Between 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?’” ¹⁸Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people.

¹⁹The 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.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

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. ³We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything. This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

¹[Jesus said:] “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ²“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand

know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁵“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when 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 when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Nicene Creed

**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.**

**LSB 437 Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed
Sermon**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from
me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free
spirit. Amen.*

Offering

Prayer of the Church

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. For the name of the Lord our God to be held sacred in our congregation and throughout the world, that His Word be taught in its truth and purity and we, as the children of God, live holy lives

according to it, as those who have been marked and redeemed by Christ, the crucified, let us pray to the Lord.

Lamb of God, have mercy upon us.

For the blessing of all who have been named and claimed by Christ and who seek to carry out His Great Commission, that when we face a world that struggles under the curse of sin and in the ashes of death, we may rejoice in the assurance of our Savior's never-failing grace, love, and deliverance, let us pray to the Lord.

Lamb of God, have mercy upon us.

For the well-being of all the world, especially the community, the schools, the workplaces, and the families in our midst, that our creator and provider would supply all that we need and enable us to dwell in peace and security, let us pray to the Lord.

Lamb of God, have mercy upon us.

For the restoration of all who are broken in heart, body, mind, spirit, and relationships, that times of difficulty would lead all who struggle to seek refuge in the support of others and, ultimately, to receive the eternal treasures of the sure mercies of our God, let us pray to the Lord.

Lamb of God, have mercy upon us.

For the healing of those who are struggling with medical issues and battling various types of illnesses, [*especially . . .*], that Jesus, our healer of both body and soul, would hear our prayers and grant mercy to them all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lamb of God, have mercy upon us.

For the answering of these and all other prayers that we boldly bring before the throne of grace, that we take confidence in God as our Father, who has marked us with the cross of His Son and redeemed us by His blood so that the ashes of our sin may be replaced by the beauty of His righteousness, let us pray to the Lord.

Lamb of God, have mercy upon us. Answer our prayers in the way that best brings glory to Your holy name. Amen.

Preface

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up unto the Lord.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.

It is meet and right so to do.

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 became sin for us at the cross, taking away the ashes of our death so that we may be redeemed by His blood and marked by His Spirit. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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 perfectly obey Your commands and fully redeem us from sin's curse by becoming a curse for us. In repentance and faith, we receive the salvation He accomplished once and for all by His sacrifice on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we ask You, O Lord, to wash away the ashes of our sin and cleanse us as Your marked and redeemed people.

Grant us faithfully to receive our Savior through His body and blood as He invites us to do in this sacred Meal.

Hear 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.

Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

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

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

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

*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.*

The Words of Our Lord

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also, He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

Agnus Dei

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace. Amen.

Distribution

Nunc Dimittis

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Let us pray.

O Jesus, Lamb of God, we thank You for refreshing us yet again through Your Word and Sacrament.

Assure us by Your Spirit that we have been marked and redeemed by You, the One who was crucified for us;

for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

CLOSING SENTENCES

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.

Benedicamus

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Bless we the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Amen, amen, amen.

LSB 887 Now the Light Has Gone Away