

# Ash Wednesday

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

Pastor Erik Allen

*Create in me a*  
**clean heart,**



*God,*  
*and renew a*  
**right spirit**  
*within me.*

*Psalm 51:10, ESV*

**GATHERING LITANY PSALM 51:1-4; 10-14**

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

C: **Cleanse my heart, O God, from sin;  
Make my spirit pure within.**

P: Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

C: **Let Your Holy Spirit be  
My companion constantly.**

P: Against You, You alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight. So You are right in judging me; You are justified in condemning me.

C: **Fill my life once more with praise;  
I will serve You all my days.**

P: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

C: **Cleanse my heart, O God, from sin;  
Make my spirit pure within.**

P: Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.

C: **Let Your Holy Spirit be  
My companion constantly.**

P: Give me the joy of Your saving help again, and sustain me with Your bountiful Spirit.

C: **Let my tongue its skill employ  
To proclaim Your saving joy.**

## KYRIE



1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.  
2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.  
3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.

We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.  
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.  
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

## GREETING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray. 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.**

## FIRST READING:

2 Corinthians 5:10b-6:10

<sup>20b</sup> We entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup> As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup> For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! <sup>3</sup> We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup> but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup> beatings,

imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup> in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup> truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup> in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true, <sup>9</sup> as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed, <sup>10</sup> as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.

P: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

#### **Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup> “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.

<sup>2</sup> “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. <sup>3</sup> But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup> “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. <sup>6</sup> But 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.

<sup>16</sup> “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. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so 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.

<sup>19</sup> “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

## SERMON

## HYMN OF THE DAY

Remember Earth-born Mortal (Tune: O Sacred Head ELW 351)

**Remember, earth-born mortal, The dust from which you came,  
And know that life's last portal Returns you to the same!  
Let ashes tell the story, From dust its lesson learn;  
Beyond life's fleeting glory To dust you shall return!**

**Like flow'rs cast in the furnace, Our lives are quickly spent.  
To dust, O God, you turn us And call us to repent:  
“Turn back, O mortals, grieving O'er your iniquity,  
That, steadfast love receiving, You may My mercy see.”**

**For you, O gracious Father, Want not the sinner's death,  
But that we, turning, rather, May breathe the Spirit's breath.  
Let true repentance holy Our daily lives employ,  
That we may trust you solely And find in You our joy.**

**Let ashes be the token Of heartfelt penitence  
And of Your promise spoken To raise our bodies hence.  
Let us show forth Your favor While in the world we live,  
And with Your saints forever Eternal life receive.**

## INVITATION TO LENT

P: 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.

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.

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 gifts 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 before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdain the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: 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.**

*People may come forward and kneel or stand to receive the ashes.  
Ministers mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:*

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

P: Accomplish in us, O God, the work 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.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

**P:** Gracious Lord, You know that Lent can be more than a time of fasting. It can also be a joyous season of feasting. Help us, Lord to see that Lent is a time to fast from certain things and to feast on others. Help us see that Lent is a season:

**C: Fast from judging others, and feast on Christ living in them.**

**To fast from emphasis on differences and feast on the unity of all life.**

**To fast from apparent darkness, and feast on the reality of light.**

**To fast from thoughts of illness, and feast on the healing power of God.**

**To fast from words that pollute, and feast on phrases that purify.**

**To fast from discontent, and feast on gratitude.**

**Fast from anger, and feast on patience.**

**Fast from pessimism, and feast on optimism.**

**Fast from worry, and feast on appreciation.**

**Fast from complaining, and feast on appreciation.**

**Fast from negatives, and feast on affirmatives**

**Fast from unrelenting pressures, and feast on unceasing prayer.**

**Fast from bitterness, and feast on forgiveness.**

**Fast from self-concern, and feast on compassion for others.**

**Fast from personal anxiety, and feast on eternal hope through Jesus.**

**Fast from discouragement, and feast on hope.**

**Fast from thoughts of weakness, and feast on promises that inspire.**

**Fast from everything that separates us from the Lord, and feast on everything that draws us to the Lord. Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

**P:** Let us pray. Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**C: 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.**

## PREFACE

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 their unending hymn:

### “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord”

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us, but guided us into the path of love and light. In every age you sent prophets to make known your loving will for all humanity. The cry of the poor has become your own cry; our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire. In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant to preach good news to the afflicted, to break bread with the outcast and despised, and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and 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 all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**C: Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection, we await the day when Jesus shall return to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate, to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age, that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection, we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

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

C: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

## COMMUNION

P: Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

## PRAYER

P: Let us pray. Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of 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.**

## SENDING HYMN

Melody: O God Our Help ELW 632

**The mercy of the Lord adore, Christ's great compassion see;  
Our sins upon the cross He bore That we might righteous be.**

**His body broken, blood outpoured Becomes a token sure;  
The loving kindness of the Lord Forever shall endure.**

**Although the grave that beckons me Shall turn me back to dust,  
Yet in my flesh my God I'll see In whom I place my trust.**

**No care my confidence can drown; My gracious God forgives!  
No grave can keep this body down, For my Redeemer lives!**

## **BLESSING**

**P:** 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 faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And may Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**C:** **Amen.**

**Postlude:** "From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee" Johann Christoph Bach

Please join us Wednesdays at 7:00 pm throughout Lent for worship.

*Liturgy from sundaysandseasons.com.*

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