



ASH
WEDNESDAY

PEACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Houghton, Michigan
Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Welcome to Worship

God's grace welcomes you, and so do we — the pastor and members of Peace! Jesus Christ is the only Savior of all people. By his perfect life, innocent death and triumphant resurrection, Jesus saves all sinners. We learn these truths from the Bible — God's complete plan for our salvation and his guidebook for our lives. Peace greets you with a warm welcome. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

Series Explanation: Open Door Policies

When a wayward child wanders far from home, how does a loving parent pursue them without driving them further away? One thing that parent does is let the child know that there is an ongoing open-door policy. The child knows they will always be welcomed back home. Likewise, when we wander from God, he always keeps his door open for us. But God doesn't passively wait for us to return. He lovingly pursues sinners in ways that make them long for home.

In the Church Year, we have come to the season of Lent. The word Lent comes from an old English word for spring: "lengthen," when the days grow longer. For over 1400 years, the church has set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter as a time of repentance and renewal. In this 40-day journey to the cross and tomb, we will see the surprising strategies our heavenly Father uses for getting sinners back home, close to him and the loving care he offers.

Worship Series Schedule: Open Door Policies

Ash Wednesday: *Lowering Our Defenses*

March 9: *One Stands; Everyone Else Sits*

March 16: *No Detours Allowed*

March 23: *Always Present, Always Patient*

March 30: *Grace Instead of Condemnation*

April 6th: *Hiding Treasure in the Trash*



Today's Focus: Ash Wednesday - Lowering Our Defenses

Whenever someone accuses us of doing wrong, it's easy to get defensive. We make excuses. "I'm not that bad." We try and balance the scales. "Okay, that was wrong. But look at all the good I do!" We play the comparison game. "At least I'm not like him!" With our defenses go up, repentance is impossible.

God, however, has a strategy for lowering our defenses. He assures us that his door is open, and that his home is the place we don't need to pretend to be something that we're not—perfect. Our Father does not ask us to come to him and confess our sin so that he might know what we've done. He already knows. He asks us to repent so that we might fully know what we've done. Only when we grasp the true weight of our sin, will we call out to God for mercy. When we do, God is always quick to forgive.

ABOUT ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, reminding us of our mortality and calling us to repent. The ancient practice of imposing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful is what gives Ash Wednesday its name. The church father Tertullian (c. A.D. 160-215) writes of the practice as a public expression of repentance and of our human frailty that stands in need of Christ. Ashes can remind us forcefully of our need for redeeming grace as they recall words from the rite of Christian burial—"earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust..."—words that will someday be spoken over us all.

Preparation for the Lord's Supper

God wants his people to prepare the sacrament of Holy Communion because it is a powerful meal. For a personal examination guide, see page 156 in the red hymnal.

Order of Service

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight.

God, Be Merciful to Me

3 I am e - vil, born in sin; you de - sire all
truth with - in. You a - lone my Sav - ior are,
teach your wis - dom to my heart; make me pure, your
grace be - stow, wash me whit - er than the snow.

The musical score is written on four staves in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff begins with a '3' indicating a triplet. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Text: Psalter, 1912, alt.
Tune: Richard Redhead
Text and tune: Public domain

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

God, Be Merciful to Me

5 Gra - cious God, my heart re - new, make my spir - it
right and true; let me not a - ban - doned be,
let your Spir - it dwell in me; your sal - va - tion's
joy im - part, stead - fast make my will - ing heart.

The musical score is written on four staves in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three flats. The lyrics are: "5 Gra - cious God, my heart re - new, make my spir - it". The second staff continues: "right and true; let me not a - ban - doned be,". The third staff continues: "let your Spir - it dwell in me; your sal - va - tion's". The fourth staff concludes: "joy im - part, stead - fast make my will - ing heart." The piece ends with a double bar line.

Text: Psalter, 1912, alt.
Tune: Richard Redhead
Text and tune: Public domain

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.

Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my
Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

God, Be Merciful to Me

7 No at - tempt - ed sac - ri - fice has ac - cept - ance
in your eyes; bro - ken hearts are in your sight
more than sac - ri - fi - cial rite; con - trite spir - it,
plead - ing cries, you, O God, will not de - spise.

The musical score is written on four staves in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff begins with a '7' indicating the start of the verse. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Text: Psalter, 1912, alt.
Tune: Richard Redhead
Text and tune: Public domain

Confession

Brothers and sisters in Christ, God created us to know joy in fellowship with him, to love all people, and to live in harmony with all creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. By our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn to him and live. Therefore, God in his mercy has sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take our place under the law, to suffer for us, and to die the death we deserve. God made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.

During the forty days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

Let us confess our sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit ourselves to this struggle.

Most holy and merciful Father,
we confess to you and to one another that we have sinned by our own fault,
by our own grievous fault
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 and mind and strength.
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.
Have mercy on us, Lord.

We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us.
We have not been true to the mind of Christ.
We have grieved the Holy Spirit.
Have mercy on us, Lord.

We have placed our wants before your will.
We have gratified the desires of our sinful nature.
We have merited your punishment now and forever.
Have mercy on us, Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness.
The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives
we confess to you, O Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, our manipulation of other people,
our anger when our selfish aims are denied, and our envy of those more
fortunate than ourselves
we confess to you, O Lord.

Our love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life
and work,
our negligence in worship and prayer, and our failure to show the faith that
is in us
we confess to you, O Lord.

Forgive us, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human
need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,
forgive us, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward others, and for
our prejudice and contempt for those who differ from us,
forgive us, Lord.

For what we think or say or do that is at variance with your will,
forgive us, Lord.

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.
Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great.

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

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

Absolution

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. He sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn

Today Your Mercy Calls Us sts. 2, 4



2 To - day your gate is o - pen, and all who en - ter in
4 O all - em - brac - ing Mer - cy, O ev - er - o - pen Door,
shall find a Fa - ther's wel - come and par - don for their sin.
what should we do with - out you when heart and eye run o'er?
The past shall be for - got - ten, a pres - ent joy be giv'n,
When all things seem a - gainst us, to drive us to de - spair,
a fu - ture grace be prom - ised, a glo - rious crown in heav'n.
we know one gate is o - pen, one ear will hear our prayer.

Text: Oswald Allen, 1816–1878, alt.
Tune: Friedrich K. Anthes, 1812–after 1857
Text and tune: Public domain

Prayer

Almighty and merciful God, you never despise what you have made and always forgive those who turn to you. Create in us such new and contrite hearts that we may truly repent of our sins and obtain your full and gracious pardon; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Reading

2 Samuel 12:1–13

¹The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, “There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

⁴“Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.”

⁵David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! ⁶He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.”

⁷Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. ⁹Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’

¹¹“This is what the LORD says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. ¹²You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’ ”

¹³Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.”

Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.

The Lord sends the prophet Nathan to call King David to repentance. Nathan lowers David’s defenses by telling the king a story about an immoral rich man.

Hymn

Today Your Mercy Calls Us st. 1

1 To - day your mer - cy calls us to wash a - way our sin.
How - ev - er great our tres - pass, what - ev - er we have been,
how - ev - er long from mer - cy our hearts have turned a - way,
your pre - cious blood can wash us and make us clean to - day.

Text: Oswald Allen, 1816–1878, alt.
Tune: Friedrich K. Anthes, 1812–after 1857
Text and tune: Public domain

God sends ambassadors to make his appeal to sinners, imploring them to be reconciled to God.

Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2

²⁰We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

¹As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. ²For he says,

“In the time of my favor I heard you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you.”

I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

Hymn

Today Your Mercy Calls Us st. 3



3 To - day our Fa - ther calls us, his Ho - ly Spir - it waits;
his bless - ed an - gels gath - er a - round the heav'n - ly gates.
No ques - tion will be asked us how of - ten we have come;
al - though we oft have wan - dered, it is our Fa - ther's home.

Text: Oswald Allen, 1816–1878, alt.

Tune: Friedrich K. Anthes, 1812–after 1857

Text and tune: Public domain

Reading

Luke 18:9–14

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

¹⁴“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

To lower the defenses of those who were self-righteous, Jesus tells a parable about what makes us righteous in God’s eyes – trusting in God’s great mercy.

Prayer

Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. Let us pray for the people of God in Christ Jesus that, through repentance and faith in the gospel, they may remain secure in your love.

Lord God, gracious Father, we thank you for setting your Son's sacrifice between us and sin's reward. By your Spirit work in us through the gospel, give us repentant hearts, make our faith firm in Christ, and enliven us to serve you faithfully.

Have mercy upon us, Lord, according to your unfailing love.

Lord God, almighty Father, renew your Church throughout the world that it may constantly look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Bless us with faithful ministers who always proclaim Christ's cross and resurrection for the salvation of the world.

Have mercy upon us, Lord, according to your unfailing love.

Lord God, loving Father, in your mercy you abundantly supply our needs of body and soul. Create in us the mind of Christ, that in humility and generosity—considering not only our own interests, but also the interests of others—we may be merciful to those in need. Direct our efforts to help poor, lonely, troubled, and ill people.

Have mercy upon us, Lord, according to your unfailing love.

Lord God, heavenly Father, comfort all who are mourning the death of people they loved. Lift their eyes to the cross where your Son defeated death and to the empty tomb where he assured us that we will live with him forever. Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Have mercy upon us, Lord, according to your unfailing love.

Lord God, heavenly Father, look with favor upon all sick, injured, and recovering people. If it be your will deliver them from their infirmities. Let them hear of your unfailing love.

Have mercy upon us, Lord, according to your unfailing love.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Lord God, eternal Father, we praise you that you have delivered the Christian souls who have gone before us from this world of dust and ashes to paradise. As their prayers continually ascend before your throne, join our prayers to theirs as fragrant incense. Hear us for the sake of him who was crucified for us and always intercedes on our behalf, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Supper

Announcement

We believe what God's Word says. God's Word clearly teaches that along with the bread and wine we receive Christ's body and blood for the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:26,28; Mk. 14:22,24; Lk. 22:19-22). God's Word also tells us that those who take Communion together are to:

- 1. Recognize that Christ's true body and blood are miraculously present in the Sacrament (1 Cor. 10:16; 11:29),*
- 2. Examine their hearts (1 Cor. 11:28), and*
- 3. Be united in faith with the congregation with which they commune (1 Cor. 10:17).*

Therefore we ask that those who have not had the opportunity to understand our Scriptural confession would speak with the pastor before participating in the Lord's Supper this morning. If you would like to come forward to receive a blessing, simply cross your arms as the pastor approaches. It is our sincere desire to share in the blessings of the Lord's Supper with you according to the pattern Jesus himself has given in his Word.



Introduction to the Lord's Supper

1 Cor. 11:28 Everyone ought to examine their hearts before partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Ps. 32:5 **I confessed my transgressions to the Lord and he forgave the guilt of my sin.**

1 Cor. 11:29 Everyone ought to recognize the true body and blood of the Lord in this Supper.

1 Cor. 10:16 **The bread that we break and the cup that we bless are a participation in the body and blood of Christ.**

Those partaking of the Lord's Supper are to be united in fellowship as one body.

1 Cor. 10:16 **Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.**

Sanctus means "holy." This canticle echoes the song that the seraphim (six-winged angels) sang before Isaiah. The angels sang the triple "holy," giving glory to our Triune God. The *Sanctus* has been used in celebration of the Lord's Supper since the second century.

Sanctus

Tune: *ANTHES*



1 Sing, "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of hosts on high,
2 Ho - san - na in the high - est! How blest is Christ our King,



your ev - er - last - ing glo - ry fills earth and sea and sky."
who died as our Re - deem - er, e - ter - nal life to bring!



Our voic - es cry, "Ho - san - na!" Lord, hear our hum - ble plea:
How blest are you, Lord Je - sus, now com - ing in God's name!



in mer - cy, come and save us; in love, come set us free.
"Ho - san - na in the high - est!" our grate - ful hearts pro - claim.

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my T body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; this is my T blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD – ANGUS DEI

Tune: WEM IN LEIDENSTAGEN



1 Lamb of God, our Sav - ior, Christ, who takes a - way
2 Je - sus, in your mer - cy, make us pure with - in;
3 Let your end - less mer - cy ev - er - more in - crease;



all the world's trans - gres - sions, lis - ten as we pray:
cleanse us by your per - fect sac - ri - fice for sin.
com - fort us with par - don, calm us with your peace.

Text: Michael D. Schultz

Tune: Friedrich Filitz

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Tune: Public domain

Distribution

After the song, please be seated. Communicants will come forward at the usher's direction.

John the Baptist declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God (Agnus Dei), the sacrifice for sins, once for all. We join countless Christians in singing these words before receiving the very thing in this Supper that these words promise, sins taken away through the blood of Jesus.

Prayer

O God the Father, source of all goodness, in your loving-kindness you sent your Son to share our humanity. We thank you that through him you have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament. We also pray that you will not forsake us but will rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that we willingly serve you day after day; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Hymn

Abide with Me sts. 1-2, 6-7



1 A - bide with me, fast falls the e - ven - tide.
2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;
6 I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
7 Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes;



The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide.
earth's joys grow dim, its glo - ries pass a - way;
ills have no weight and tears no bit - ter - ness.
shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.



When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,
change and de - cay in all a - round I see;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy vic - to - ry?
Heav'n's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain shad - ows flee;



help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.
O thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me.
I tri - umph still if thou a - bide with me.
in life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me!

There will be no post-service announcements or greetings. The congregation may exit on their own after a few moments.

Announcements

Foundations of Faith

Foundations is for everyone: people interested in becoming members, those looking to build their faith, or the curious observer who wants to study the Bible without feeling obligated to join a church. This study is Bible-based and discussion-centered. Classes can be arranged to fit personal schedules.

To get plugged in or to request more information, contact Pastor Welch (pastor@peacehoughton.org). Childcare is available upon request.

Online Offering Option

If you would like to give an online offering today, please scan the QR code. All online donations are safe and go directly to Peace.



Upcoming Events

There is a full schedule of events for both members and students alike. You can find the full schedule on the tables in the fellowship hall, on the app or website, or by scanning the QR code.



Shifting from Wednesday Dinner and Bible Study to Wednesday Lenten Dinners and Services

For most of the year, our church provides meals for students on Wednesdays prior to a Bible study. **During the season of Lent, the students will not be meeting for Bible study.** However, there will still be a meal on Wednesday. If you are interested in helping to serve or provide a meal, please sign up on the sheet in the entryway. More than one person can sign up for a meal. Please reach out to Pastor Welch if you have any questions.



PEACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

47745 Mill Rd.
Houghton, MI 49931

Office: 906-482-1602

Pastor Welch's Cell: 906-231-6835

Pastor Welch's Email: pastor@peacehoughton.org

Peacehoughton.org

Our mission is to spread the gospel of Christ, to gather college students and the local community into a family of believers, and to share the message of hope and the promise of salvation through grace.