



A Call To Return

Ash Wednesday Service

Hope Lutheran Evangelical Church

February 17, 2021

Pastor David M. Oddi

ASH WEDNESDAY

A CALL TO RETURN

Through the words of the prophet Joel, God called to His people and commanded that they turn from their sinful ways and return to Him for His grace and blessings. The images the prophet uses are vivid and disturbing. The situation of God's people is desperate and needs immediate attention. This is a time for listening and responding to the call to return to faithfulness to the God who has ever been faithful to His people. "Return to the Lord, your God" is more than a verse sung as part of the liturgy. It is a heartfelt directive for our lives as together we follow the pathway of Lent.

+ **Preparation** +

HYMN

"To Thee, Omniscient Lord of All" (LSB 613)

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

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.

Silence for reflection

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.

As the ashes are imposed on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, the pastor says, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you

shall return.” After receiving the ashes, each person returns to their place in silence.

P Almighty God, we beseech You to grant us true repentance and Your Holy Spirit, that the rest of our lives may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to Your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Please stand

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Psalm 25:1–5

P To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

C O my God, in You I trust;

P let me not be put to shame;

C let not my enemies exult over me.

P Indeed, none who wait for You shall be put to shame;

C they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

P Make me to know Your ways, O LORD;

C teach me Your paths.

P Lead me in Your truth and teach me,

C for You are the God of my salvation;
for You I wait all the day long.

+ CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +

P Let us now confess our sins to our heavenly Father, imploring Him for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

(Silence for reflection on the Word of God and for self-examination.)

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess to You all my sins in thought, word, and deed with which I have offended You. By nature, I am sinful and unclean. Time and again I have not responded to Your call to return to You and to walk in Your ways. Although I justly

deserve Your punishment in time and for eternity, I am truly sorry for my transgressions and sincerely repent of them. In Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, forgive me all my sins, and by the working of the Holy Spirit direct me to walk in Your loving ways.

P God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith.

C Amen.

P Do you believe that the forgiveness I speak is not my forgiveness but God's?

C Yes.

P Let it be done for you as you believe.

P In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it. Go in † peace.

C Amen.

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

O Lord, You bid Your people return to You in repentance and have promised forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Grant that, forgiven and free, we may live each day in joyful hope as Your beloved children; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

+ Word +

Please be seated

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Joel 2:12–19

P The Old Testament Reading for Ash Wednesday is from Joel, the second chapter.

- 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.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10

P The Epistle is from Second Corinthians, the fifth and sixth chapters.

^{20b} We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

¹ Working together with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For 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. ³ We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ by purity, knowledge, patience,

kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love;⁷ by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;⁸ through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;⁹ as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed;¹⁰ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Please stand

C VERSE (*spoken*)

Joel 2:13b

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

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

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

C Glory to You, 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. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so 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. ⁶ But 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. ¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that 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, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

NICENE CREED

C 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.

Please be seated

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Jesus, I Will Ponder Now” (LSB 440)

SERMON

Please stand

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

For the faithful proclamation of Christ’s saving name, that God’s people may be strengthened in the true faith and His kingdom extended, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the holy Christian Church throughout the world and for all who confess the name of Christ, that God would guard and defend us from the temptations of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For this congregation, its mission, and its people; for the ability to meet the needs that arise as we do the work God has given us to do; and for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the educational institutions of our Synod; for our preschools, our day schools, and high schools, our colleges and universities, and for our seminaries, that those who teach and those who learn in them would be transformed by the wisdom of Christ, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For those who partake this day of Christ’s holy body and blood, that in their eating and drinking they may receive the benefits of forgiveness of sins and the renewal of life and have a foretaste of the feast to come, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For those who have wandered from the faith, that the Holy Spirit would use us to call them home to the Father, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

- P** For the government and all who have been set into positions of leadership, that they may use the authority entrusted to them honorably and for the good of the people, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For all who serve in worthy occupations, professions, arts, and sciences, that God would grant them skill and integrity in the performance of their responsibilities and valued service through their vocations, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those who suffer from hunger, homelessness, poverty, or unemployment, that God's great mercy and love would preserve and relieve them, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For all the faithful, that the Spirit would lead them to cheerful, generous giving from the bounty the Lord provides, to support the Church and to help those in need, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those who are sick, [especially . . .], that God would grant healing to their bodies and strength to bear their infirmities with patience and grace, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those who mourn, [especially . . .], that in their time of sorrow they would not lose hope but rely on God's promise that He will never leave them or forsake them, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those who rejoice in the rich blessings of God, that they may always remember the Giver of every gift and give Him heartfelt thanks, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** These and any other things You would have us ask of You, heavenly Father, grant to us for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray.
- C** **Amen.**

+ SACRAMENT +

PREFACE (*chanted*) LSB p. 160**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 Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

P 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, for You are gracious and You call us to return to You with repentant hearts. As we hear Your call and respond to it, grant that we experience the fullness of Your mercy and the joy of Your salvation. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

C Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:
 Heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING - LSB, p. 161

P 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 bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive 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.

C Amen.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD - *LSB, p. 162*

P 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.”

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

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

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, as You call us to repentance and to prayer, with faith and hope we turn to You, the source of mercy and love. Remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD’S PRAYER - *LSB, p. 162*

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.

THE PEACE OF THE LORD

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

AGNUS DEI – Hymn “Lamb of God, Pure and Holy” (LSB 434 v.1)

Please be seated

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

“O Lord, We Praise Thee” (*LSB* 617)

“Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise” (*LSB* 680)

NUNC DIMITTIS – *LSB* p. 165

C Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace;

Your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen the salvation

which You have prepared in the sight of every people:

A light to reveal You to the nations

and the glory of Your people Israel.

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.

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

P Let us pray.

We give thanks, heavenly Father, that You have again refreshed us with the body and blood of Your only-begotten Son. As You have called us to Your Table by Your grace, strengthen us to daily turn and return to You with thanks and praise, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

CLOSING COLLECT

P Gracious and merciful God, You call Your people to return, and 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.

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

Please be seated

HYMN “O Lord, throughout These Forty Days” (*LSB* 418)

The congregation leaves quietly as they reflect on the evening.

Acknowledgments

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