

**Family of Christ Lutheran Church**  
**Ash Wednesday**  
**February 18, 2026**

***Enter In Silence***

**Litany of Invitation (based on Joel 2:1-2, 12-17)**

Even now, return to me.

**Even now, God says, return to me.**

Let the sirens in the streets rage; let the trumpet from the church house blow. Let those consumed with shadows, gloomy from bad fortunes know that

**Even now, God says, return to me.**

Let the downtrodden and the mighty listen; let the holy and the wicked revere; let the sinner and the scornful draw close.

**Even now, God says, return to me.**

Return from your ignorance, return from your injustice.

Return from your apathy, return from your agony.

**Even now, God says, return to me.**

Return from selfishness, return from greed. Return from neglect, return from the sting of death.

**Even now, God says, return to me.**

Return to me, with a clean heart. Return to me with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

**Return to me, God says, for I am gracious and merciful; I am slow to anger and full of steadfast love. Return to me, God says, for I am your God.**

*adapted from Litany Leading to Prayer by The Rev. Joseph W. Daniels, Jr. Found at [umcdiscipleship.org](http://umcdiscipleship.org)*

### **Prayer of the Day**

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. **Amen.**

## **Hymn: ELW 609 Chief of Sinners Though I Be**

### Chief of Sinners though I Be



1 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Je - sus shed his blood for me,  
2 Oh, the height of Je - sus' love! High - er than the heav'ns a - bove,  
3 On - ly Je - sus can im - part balm to heal the wound - ed heart,  
4 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Christ is all in all to me;  
5 O my Sav - ior, help af - ford by your Spir - it and your word!



died that I might live on high, lives that I might nev - er die.  
deep - er than the depths of sea, last - ing as e - ter - ni - ty.  
peace that flows from sin for - giv'n, joy that lifts the soul to heav'n,  
all my wants to him are known, all my sor - rows are his own.  
When my way - ward heart would stray, keep me in the nar - row way;



As the branch is to the vine, I am his, and he is mine.  
Love that found me—won - drous thought—found me when I sought him not.  
faith and hope to walk with God in the way that E - noch trod.  
He sus - tains the hid - den life safe with him from earth - ly strife.  
grace in time of need sup - ply while I live and when I die.

Text: William McComb, 1793–1870

Music: GETHSEMANE, Richard Redhead, 1820–1901

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## **Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10**

20bWe 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. 6:1As 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.

Word of God, Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Silence for reflection*

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

The Holy Gospel According to Matthew.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

[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.”

The Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to You, O Christ.**  
*Silence for reflection*

## **Homily**

### **Psalm 51:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;

    in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

**<sup>2</sup>Wash me through and through from my wickedness,  
    and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my offenses,

    and my sin is ever before me.

**<sup>4</sup>Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil  
    in your sight;**

    so you are justified when you speak and right in  
    your judgment.

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,  
    a sinner from my mother's womb.

**<sup>6</sup>Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,  
    and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
    wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

**<sup>8</sup>Let me hear joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

**<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my wickedness.**

### **Invitation into Lent**

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, emptying ourselves in confession. We are created to overflow with 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 feel empty and 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 empties us of 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 through these forty days to contend with our emptiness until we reach the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

## **Confession and Forgiveness**

God knows our hearts, the guilt we carry, the heartache that keeps us awake, the burdens we bear. God knows that “happy are they who are forgiven,” and so we confess in confidence of God’s forgiveness.

*A brief silence*

Good and gracious God, **we have sinned and fallen short of the good you desire for us and for all creation. We have seen the earth as resources to extract and forgotten to marvel at its beauty. We have doubted your ability to provide and hoarded more than we need. We have ignored the needs of the vulnerable, and when you called us to follow you to greater wonders, we remained where we were and clung to control. Forgive our sin and our selfishness. Draw us out of ourselves, more deeply into your love, and more fully into a world in need.**

God knows our sin before we do and meets every confession with abundant grace. In Christ, we are alive and completely forgiven. God’s goodness has the final word. May this gift renew our faith and lighten our load so that we are prepared to care for the world God so loves. **Amen.**

**Hymn: ELW 592 Just As I Am, without One Plea**

## Just As I Am, without One Plea



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was  
2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y\_a con - flict,  
3 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt wel - come, par - don,  
4 Just as I am; thy love un-known has bro - ken ev - 'ry

shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,  
man - y\_a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,  
cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise I be - lieve,  
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,

O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789–1871

Music: WOODWORTH, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

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## Blessing of the Ashes

God of all, bless these ashes and those who receive them. Let them be a sign of our repentance and of your faithfulness. The mark of Jesus' cross will remind us of how

you are all in for us and for the world. May that reminder stay with us even when these ashes are washed away. God of all, bless these ashes and those who receive them. **Amen.**

### **Imposition of Ashes**

*Worshippers may come forward by the center aisle to receive the ashes. A mark of ashes is made on the forehead with these words:*

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

### **Psalm 51:15-17**

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

<sup>16</sup>**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.**

**You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;  
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

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.**

### **Offering is collected**

## **Offering and elements are brought forward**

### **Offering Prayer**

God who provides, **we return to you a portion of all that you have given us. Bless and use these gifts, our hands, our hearts, our ministry, to care for the world you so love. Now prepare us to receive you at this table and again in the world beyond our doors. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

### **Eucharistic Prayer**

**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 our thanks and praise.**

We have to praise you, we have to thank you, God, because the whole universe is filled with your wonders. On this very day you overcome the powers of death and destruction forever, and so, in thankfulness, we join the song of the angels:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r 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.

Creator, you made a wondrous world and called it good. You planted a garden, and in it, you crafted your creatures, even our ancestors. When sin, pain, and death entered the world, you did not leave us but remained a lover and friend of humanity. You made outrageous and hope-filled promises to Abram and Sarai, you brought water from a rock when your people wandered in the wilderness, you saw the possibilities in least and lowly, and you knew that life could come even from dry old bones.

When at last the time was right, you were born to be with us in Jesus and joined us in the highs and lows of human existence. You met Nicodemus in his nighttime wondering, you welcomed the questions of the woman at the well, you witnessed the rejection of the man born blind, you wept at the grace of Lazarus, and you even went through death for us.

On the night of his betrayal and arrest, knowing it was time to give all of himself, Jesus took bread, 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 for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

And so, we remind each other and the world:

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Spirit on us, your gathered people, and on this meal, your gifts of bread and cup. Through a holy mystery, let this become for us the body and blood of Christ. Let it remind us of the unending feast for which we are bound. Let it strengthen us, that we will become the body of Christ for the world you so love. **Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus has taught us:

**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.**

**Invitation to Communion**

Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy. **Amen.**

## Communion Hymn: ACS 1078

### There Is a Longing in Our Hearts

*Refrain — All*



There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord, for you to reveal your - self to us. There is a longing in our hearts for love we on - ly find in you, our God.

*Leader or All*



1 For jus - tice, for free - dom, for mer - cy:  
2 For wis - dom, for cour - age, for com - fort:  
3 For heal - ing, for whole-ness, for new life:  
4 Lord, save us, take pit - y, light in our

hear our prayer. In sor - row, in grief:  
hear our prayer. In weak - ness, in fear:  
hear our prayer. In sick - ness, in death:  
deep-est night. We call you; we wait:

be near; hear our prayer, O God.

*Refrain*

Text: Anne Quigley, b. 1955

Music: LONGING, Anne Quigley

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### **Post-Communion Blessing**

The Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, bless you and keep you in His grace. **Amen.**

### **Post-Communion Prayer**

God, you have revealed yourself to us again in the holy mystery of bread and cup.

**Strengthen us by your presence, draw us closer to one another as the Body of Christ, and send us to reveal you in our all our words and ways. Amen.**

### **Sending**

### **Blessing and Sending**

As you have met God in this place, go now to meet God beyond this place. As you have received the love of Jesus, go now to give the love of Jesus. As the Creator has been all in for you, go now and be all in for the sake of the world.

Gracious God, Parent, Sibling,  $\pm$  and Spirit, bless you as you go. **Amen.**

## Hymn: ELW 793

### Be Thou My Vision



1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
3 Rich- es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,  
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:  
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,  
thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,  
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.  
great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931  
Music: SLANE, Irish traditional

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