



# ASH WEDNESDAY

Christ Lutheran Church  
Forest Hills, PA  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026  
7:00pm

# CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

400 Barclay Avenue Forest Hills, PA 15221  
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The Reverend Ronald Breight  
Douglas Skalka  
Timothy Breight  
Annette Bowen

Pastor  
Organist  
Worship Assistant  
Lector

## TO OUR GUESTS

*A special welcome to our visitors – please fill out a welcome card located in the card holder in the pew. If you do not have a regular place to share in the blessing of God, we'd like you to know that there is a special place here for you.*

## AS WE GATHER

From Old Testament history to the present, ashes have been a sign of contrition. Although some might call them Roman Catholic, ashes are an ancient symbol in the Bible. Sackcloth and ashes were not only a sign of sorrow over sin but also a mark of faith looking for forgiveness from God. Ashes are not sacramental. They are not essential. Ashes are offered for those who mourn over their sins and find them a meaningful expression—of the reality of their sin, of their personal responsibility for their sin, over the hurtful effects of sin, and of their faith in God's grace and forgiveness.

The mood of this service is somber as we reflect upon the quality of our faith and life. We consider discipline—the discipline of faith and living as a child of God as well as the special discipline of our Lenten season. We keep the focus on redemption, on the gift of God in our Baptism, and in the renewal of our faith and lives.

# ORDER OF SERVICE

**Prayer on Entering Church:** Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells. In the multitude of Your tender mercies prepare my heart that I may enter Your house to worship and confess Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, my God and Lord. Amen.

## PRELUDE

From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee

Fredrich Wilhelm Zachau

## RINGING OF THE BELLS/ WELCOME

## OPENING HYMN

Lord Jesus, Think on Me

Hymnal p. 610

Lord Jesus, think on me And purge away my sin;  
From worldly passions set me free And make me pure within.

Lord Jesus, think on me, By anxious thoughts oppressed;  
Let me Your loving servant be And taste Your promised rest.

Lord Jesus, think on me amid the battle's strife;  
In all my pain and misery, O be my health and life!

Lord Jesus, think on me Nor let me go astray;  
Through darkness and perplexity Point out Your chosen way.

Lord Jesus, think on me That, when this life is past,  
I may th'eternal brightness see And share Your joy at last.

## INVOCATION

*The sign of the cross (†) may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

P: In the name of the Father and of the (†) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

## CONFSSION

P: Brothers and sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with Him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of His creation. However, sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under judgment, but to turn to Him and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from the love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love – the disciplines of Lent – help us to wage our

spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking your Father for strength to preserve you in your Lenten discipline.

*(We take a moment of silence before the Lord as we call to mind how we have not properly loved Him, ourselves, or other people.)*

P: Most holy and merciful Father

C: **We confess to You and to one another and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

P: 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.

C: **Have mercy on us, O Lord.**

P: 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 Your Holy Spirit. We confess to You, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness; the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

A: **We confess to You, O Lord.**

P: Our self-indulgent appetites and habits; our exploitation of other people,

A: **We confess to You, O Lord.**

P: Our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

A: **We confess to You, O Lord.**

P: Our uncontrolled love of worldly goods and comforts and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

A: **We confess to You, O Lord.**

P: Our negligence in prayer and worship and our failure to commend to others the faith that is in us,

A: **We confess to You, O Lord.**

P: Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

A: **Accept our repentance, O Lord.**

P: For false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts towards our neighbors and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

A: **Accept our repentance, O Lord.**

P: Restore us, good Lord, and let Your anger depart from us.

**A: Hear us, Lord, for Your mercy is great. Amen**

## THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*All who desire to receive ashes come forward down the center aisle, receive the ashes either on the forehead or hand, and return to their seat using the side or center aisle.*

*Ashes are placed on the forehead or hand of each person with the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return."*

**Savior, When in Dust to Thee**

Hymnal p. 419

Savior, when in dust to Thee Low we bow in homage due;  
When, repentant, to the skies Scarce we lift our weeping eyes,  
Oh, by all Thy pains and woe Suffered once for us below,  
Bending from Thy throne on high, Hear our penitential cry!

By Thine helpless infant years, By Thine life of want and tears,  
By Thy days of sore distress In the savage wilderness,  
By the dread, mysterious hour Of the insulting tempter's pow'r,  
Turn, oh turn, a fav'ring eye, Hear our penitential cry!

By Thy hour of dire despair, By Thy agony of prayer,  
By the cross, the nail, the thorn, Piercing spear, and torturing scorn,  
By the gloom that veiled the skies O'er the dreadful sacrifice,  
Listen to our humble cry, Hear our penitential cry!

By Thy deep expiring groan, By the sad sepulchral stone,  
By the vault whose dark abode Held in vain the rising God,  
Oh, from earth to heav'n restored, Mighty, reascended Lord,  
Bending from Thy throne on high, Hear our penitential cry!

*After all who desire ashes have received them, the confession is concluded as follows:*

P: Accomplish in us, O Lord, 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 Lord,

**C: bring us with all Your saints to the joy of His resurrection.**

P: 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. Therefore, we implore Him to grant us true repentance and His Holy Spirit, that those things we do on this day may please Him, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to His eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

(Silence)

## COLLECT

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray,

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts, that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

## FIRST READING

Joel 2:12-19

L: The first reading for Ash Wednesday is from chapter two of Joel.

*In this reading we are told to return to the Lord.*

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and 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. Who 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?

Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather 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.

Between 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?’”

Then the Lord became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. The 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.

*Following the reading...*

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

## Renew Me, O Eternal Light

Renew me, O eternal Light,  
And let my heart and soul be bright,  
Illumined with the light of grace  
That issues from Thy holy face.

Destroy in me the lust of sin,  
From all impurity make me clean.  
Oh, grant me power and strength, my God,  
To strive against my flesh and blood!

Create in me a new heart, Lord,  
That gladly I obey Thy Word  
And naught but what Thou wilt, desire;  
With such new life my soul inspire.

Grant that I only Thee may love  
And seek those things which are above  
Till I behold Thee face to face,  
O Light eternal, through Thy grace.

## SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

L: The second reading is from 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

*We are encouraged to be ambassadors for Christ.*

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Working together with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 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. We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful,

yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

*Following the reading...*

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL** (*please stand*)

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

P: The Holy Gospel is according to St. Matthew, chapter six.

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

*In this Gospel Jesus teaches us about alms, fasting and the treasures of our hearts.*

**Giving to the Needy**

“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. “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. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

**The Lord's Prayer**

“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. 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.

**Fasting**

“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. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 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.

**Lay Up Treasures in Heaven**

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

*Following the reading...*

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

## HYMN

**Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing**

Hymnal p. 421

**Jesus, grant that balm and healing**

**In Your holy wounds I find,**

**Ev'ry hour that I am feeling**

**Pains of body and of mind.**

**Should some evil thought within**

**Tempt my treach'rous heart to sin,**

**Show the peril, and from sinning**

**Keep me from its first beginning.**

**Should some lust or sharp temptation**

**Fascinate my sinful mind,**

**Draw me to Your cross and passion,**

**and new courage I shall find.**

**Or should Satan press me hard,**

**Let me then be on my guard,**

**Saying, "Christ for me was wounded,"**

**That the tempter flee confounded.**

**If the world my heart entices**

**With the broad and easy road,**

**With seductive, sinful vices,**

**Let me weigh the awful load**

**You were willing to endure.**

**Help me flee all thoughts impure**

**And to master each temptation,**

**Calm in prayer and meditation.**

**Ev'ry wound that pains or grieves me**

**By Your wounds, Lord, is made whole;**

**When I'm faint, Your cross revives me,**

**Granting new life to my soul.**

**Yes, Your comfort renders sweet**

**Ev'ry bitter cup I meet;**

**For Your all atoning passion**

**Has procured my soul's salvation.**

**O my God, my rock and tower,**

**Grant that in Your death I trust,**

**Knowing death has lost its power  
Since You crushed it in the dust.**

**Savior, let Your agony  
Ever help and comfort me;  
When I die be my protection,  
Light and life and resurrection.**

## **SERMON**

### **OFFERING OF OUR TITHES AND GIFTS**

#### **VOLUNTARY**

In Holy Conversation

Keith Kolander

#### **VERSE**

**On My Heart Imprint Your Image**

Hymnal p. 422

**On my heart imprint Your image, Blessed Jesus, King of grace,  
That life's riches, cares, and pleasures Never may Your work erase;  
Let the clear inscription be: Jesus, crucified for me,  
Is my life, my hope's foundation, And my glory and salvation!**

## **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

P: Because our Lord Jesus invites us to pray to His Father who is unseen, let us come to His throne of grace pleading, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love."

Heavenly Father, we do not want to receive Your grace in vain. Because You are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, work in the lives of each of us so that we return to You with all our heart. Because where our treasure is our hearts will be also, set our hearts on You, on Your Son, and on Your life-restoring Word. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: Heavenly Father, on this Ash Wednesday, we beg you to send Your Holy Spirit to create in us pure hearts and steadfast spirits so that we dedicate ourselves in this holy season to prayer, fasting and almsgiving for our own sake and for all those in need. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: Heavenly Father, grant us repentance that comes at the Table of our Lord this day, recognizing the enormity of our sins and grant us faith through Christ's body and blood to receive Your even greater forgiveness for our sins. Inspire in each of us a life filled with good works that glorify You as others see Your compassion in our actions. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: Hear our petitions, heavenly Father, for we pray in Your Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

## SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Hymnal p. 194

The Lord's Supper (Holy Communion) is being celebrated in today's service. In preparation for that, please be reminded that the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are not merely representations or symbols of Jesus' body and blood but Jesus' body and blood sacrificed on the cross are present in, with, and under the bread and wine (The Real Presence). How is this possible? This is beyond human understanding, but we remember that with God all things are possible. This truth is a divine mystery instituted by Jesus, taught by his Apostles, fervently held by the Christian church, and one in which we participate through faith. To be properly prepared to receive this sacrament, you must

- 1) Recognize that you have indeed sinned against God and other people and are accountable to God for those sins;
- 2) Be sorry (repentant) for those sins;
- 3) Believe that in this sacrament Jesus bestows forgiveness, life, and salvation; and
- 4) Sincerely desire to live a godly life from this point forward.

If you are not a member of Christ Lutheran Church, please speak with the pastor before receiving communion here for the first time.

## PREFACE

P: The Lord be with you.

C: (*sung*) **And with thy spirit.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: (*sung*) **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.

C: (*sung*) **It is meet and right so to do.**

## PROPER PREFACE

P: It is truly meet, right, and salutary      ...evermore praising You and singing:

## SANCTUS

**Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth;  
Heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory.  
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is He, blessed is He,  
Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

## THE 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

### PAX DOMINI

P: The peace of the Lord be with you in all ways.

C: (sung) 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.**

**Prayer before communing:** Dear Savior, at Your gracious invitation I come to Your table to eat and drink Your holy body and blood. Let me find favor in Your eyes to receive this holy Sacrament in faith for the salvation of my soul and to the glory of Your holy name; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God now and forever. Amen.

## DISTRIBUTION

*Form a line at the communion rail starting at the left side. When the line is half full, begin filling it in from the right side. When invited, approach the rail and kneel/stand. If you want to receive a gluten-free wafer at communion, let the worship assistant know as he comes by with the wafers. After communion, exit through the right doorway, place individual communion cups in the tray, and proceed down the stairs back to your seat.*

## MUSIC SELECTION

In Remembrance

Vocal Choir

## DISTRIBUTION HYMN

**Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior**

Hymnal p. 627

**Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior, Turned away God's wrath forever;  
By His bitter grief and woe He saved us from the evil Foe.**

**He the pledge of love undying, Spread this table, grace supplying,  
Gives His body with the bread, And with the wine the blood He shed.**

**Praise the Father, who from heaven To His own this food has given,  
Who, to mend what we have done, Gave into death His only Son.**

Firmly hold the faith unshaken That this food is to be taken  
By the sick who are distressed, By hearts that long for peace and rest.

Christ says: "Come, all you that labor, And receive My grace and favor:  
They that feel no want nor ill Need no physician's help nor skill."

As your heart this truth professes And your mouth your sin confesses,  
You will be your Savior's guest, Be at His banquet truly blest.

Let this food your faith so nourish That by love its fruits may flourish  
And your neighbor learn from you How much God's wondrous love can do.

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#100014542

## VOLUNTARY

Create in Me

Richard W. Gieseke

*(After the distribution is finished, please rise and sing the Nunc Dimitis)*

## 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.

## THANKSGIVING

P: O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,

C: (sung) and His mercy endureth forever.

## COLLECT

P: Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through  
this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would  
strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love  
toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and  
reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: (sung) Amen.

## BENEDICTION

P: The Lord be with you.

C: (sung) And with thy spirit.

P: Bless we the Lord.

C: (sung) **Thanks be to God.**

P: 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.

C: (sung) **Amen, amen, amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN

**O Lord, throughout These Forty Days**

Hymnal p. 418

**O Lord, throughout these forty days**

**You prayed and kept the fast;**

**Inspire repentance for our sin,**

**And free us from our past.**

**You strove with Satan, and You won;**

**Your faithfulness endured;**

**Lend us Your nerve, Your skill and trust**

**In God's eternal Word.**

**Though parched and hungry, yet You prayed**

**And fixed Your mind above;**

**So teach us to deny ourselves,**

**Since we have known God's love.**

**Be with us through this season, Lord,**

**And all our earthly days,**

**That when the final Easter dawns,**

**We join in heaven's praise.**

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**Prayer after worship:** Almighty and merciful God, I have again worshiped in Your presence and received both forgiveness for my many sins and the assurance of Your love in Jesus Christ. I thank You for this undeserved grace and ask You to keep me in faith until, with all Your saints, I inherit eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

## POSTLUDE

**Forth in Thy Name I Go**

Ronald A. Nelson