

**Ash Wednesday**

**CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH** | Lodi, California

*February 14, 2024*

**WELCOME TO WORSHIP**

Welcome to Christ Lutheran Church. We pray that your soul will be strengthened by the good news about God’s grace, love, and forgiveness given to us. If you would like to learn more about our church, please speak with our pastor or one of our members after the service.

* **Bathrooms** are located in the fellowship hall. A changing table is located in the women’s bathroom.

**WORSHIP THEME**

“He remembers that we are dust” (Psalm 103:14). Ash Wednesday has been for the Church a time of reflection on our mortality, which should lead us to repentance. The Lord first made Adam from the dust of the ground, and to dust we return when we reach the end of our days. May we remember this fact in this season of Lent.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, our 40-day journey with our Lord to the cross and tomb. The 40 days call to our minds Moses’ 40 days on Mount Sinai and the Israelites’ 40 years of wandering; Elijah’s 40-day journey back to Sinai; and our Lord’s fast and temptation at the beginning of his ministry.

Though we travel through the wilderness of this sinful world, the Lord remembers that we are dust, but not dust alone. He forgives all our sins, redeems our lives from the pit, and his love is with us from everlasting to everlasting. He breathes life into us by his Spirit, and has worked salvation through his Son, who took on our flesh and died in our place. May God bless our Lenten meditation.

**Evening Prayer** |

*Evening Prayer is based on the historic service called “Vespers.” Christians gather at the end of the day to raise their voices in thankful praise and prayer.*

*Lent: A Time of Catechetical Review*

*Already at the time of the Reformation, Lutheran churches would hold special services several times each year that to review the catechism, a summary of key biblical teachings. We follow this Lutheran tradition this Lent by gathering for special midweek services to meditate on the Bible’s teaching about baptism: There is a connection between our baptism and Christ’s passion. This makes Lent the perfect season to learn anew all that which God’s Word tells us about Baptism. We will see how we were powerfully connected in our baptism to all Christ’s saving work.*

**Opening Responses**

P: O Lord, open my lips.

**C: And my mouth will declare your praise.**

P: Hasten to save me, O God.

**C: O Lord, come quickly to help me.**

P: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

**C: As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

hymn *Savior, When in Dust to You|* CW21 393

Confession of sins

P: 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 remember that we are dust, and to dust we shall return; and let us confess our sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit ourselves to this struggle.

 Most holy and merciful Father,

**C: 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.**

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 other as we have been forgiven.

**C: Have mercy on us, 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 the Holy Spirit.

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

P: 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.

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

P: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness.

 The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives.

**C: We confess to you, O Lord.**

P: 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.

**C: We confess to you, O Lord.**

P: 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.

**C: We confess to you, O Lord.**

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

**C: Forgive us, Lord.**

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

**C: Forgive us, Lord.**

P: For what we think or say or do that is at variance with your will,

**C: Forgive us, Lord.**

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

**C: Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great.**

P: Accomplish in us, Lord, the work of your salvation

**C: that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

P: By the cross and suffering of your Son,

**C: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

*Silence for meditation*

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. 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.

**C: Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

M: Let us pray.

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.

**C: Amen**

**FIRST LESSON** *Joel 2:12–19*

*Through the prophet Joel, the LORD tells us that our top priority is to return to him in true repentance. We will find that the LORD is gracious and compassionate.*

**12**“Even now,” declares the Lord,
    “return to me with all your heart,
    with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

**13**Rend your heart
    and not your garments.
Return to the Lord your God,
    for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
    and he relents from sending calamity.
**14**Who knows? He may turn and relent
    and leave behind a blessing—
grain offerings and drink offerings
    for the Lord your God.

**15**Blow the trumpet in Zion,
    declare a holy fast,
    call a sacred assembly.
**16**Gather the people,
    consecrate the assembly;
bring together the elders,
    gather the children,
    those nursing at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
    and the bride her chamber.
**17**Let the priests, who minister before the Lord,
    weep between the portico and the altar.
Let them say, “Spare your people, Lord.
    Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn,
    a byword among the nations.
Why should they say among the peoples,
    ‘Where is their God?’”

**18**Then the Lord was jealous for his land
    and took pity on his people.

**19**The Lord replied to them:

“I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil,
    enough to satisfy you fully;
never again will I make you
    an object of scorn to the nations.

**PSALM** *Psalm 51, CW ‘21*

**SECOND LESSON** *Revelation 3:1–3*

*Jesus tells a spiritually dead church what their top priority should be: wake up, repent, and remember what they had heard about God’s grace.*

**3**“To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. **2**Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. **3**Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

**VERSE OF THE DAY** *Genesis 3:19*

**You will return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you will return.**

**THE GOSPEL** *Luke 12:13–21*

 *Jesus tells a parable about a man who forgot that we are all turning back into dust—a man with badly misguided priorities.*

**13**Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

**14**Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” **15**Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

**16**And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. **17**He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’

**18**“Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. **19**And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’

**20**“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

**21**“This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

M This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise be to you, O Christ!**

**APOSTLES’ CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,**

 **maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

 **who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

 **born of the Virgin Mary,**

 **suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

 **was crucified, died, and was buried.**

 **He descended into hell.**

 **The third day he rose again from the dead.**

 **He ascended into heaven**

 **and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

 **From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

 **the holy Christian Church,**

 **the communion of saints,**

 **the forgiveness of sins,**

 **the resurrection of the body,**

 **and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**HYMN OF THE DAY** *Jesus Sinners Does Receive***| CW’21 654**

**SERMON** *1 Peter 3:18–22*

**OFFERTORY**

**OFFERING**

*In response to God’s love and forgiveness, we give back a portion of what he has given us. The members of Christ Lutheran Church have joined to proclaim the gospel to this community. These offerings support that work. While our guests are welcome to participate, they should not feel obligated to do so.*

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

M: Holy and righteous God, as we begin again the solemn spiritual journey of Lent, we come before you in deep humility. We confess that we are sinners, both by the nature we inherit and by the sinful thoughts and desires, words and actions that nature produces. Because of our sins, we deserve only your wrath and punishment. Yet you reveal yourself, not only as a God of holiness and justive but as a God of mercy and grace. Despairing of our own merits and worthiness, and in response to your gracious invitation, we come pleading your forgiveness.

 You have revealed your love and mercy in your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. You sent him into our world to be the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all people. Help us grasp by faith the great truth that the pain and suffering, the mockery and ridicule, and the death and punishment he endured should have been ours. Help us understand that in incomprehensible love he suffered and died for us.

 In silent meditation let us reflect on our sins, praise our Savior for his forgiveness, and ask for God’s continued grace to remove all our doubt.

 *Silence for meditation*

 God of grace and mercy, may your Spirit continue to be with us as we follow the way of the cross. As we contemplate the story of our Savior’s passion, build us up in our faith. Renew in us the zeal to serve you by reflecting your love in our lives. Give us the desire to proclaim your grace, and the ability to share it boldly to all for whom you lived and died. Hear us for your mercy’s sake.

**C: Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER** *Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4*

**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;**

 **and forgive us our sins,**

 **as we forgive those**

 **who sin against us;**

 **and lead us not into temptation,**

 **but deliver us from evil.**

 **For the kingdom, the power,**

 **and the glory are yours**

 **now and forever. Amen.**

**THE BLESSING**

M**:** The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

The Lord look on you with favor and ✙ give you peace.

**C: Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN** *Jesus, I Will Ponder Now***| CW'21 420**

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Pastor Timothy Leistekow

**WELCOME TO CHRIST EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH!**

We preach a message of forgiveness, hope and peace

through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Families and individuals of all ages will find opportunities

both to grow and to serve.

Our mission statement:

**Look what Christ is doing!**

He binds us together in fellowship

He gathers us in for worship

He builds us up for service

He sends us out with the gospel

*“Now you are the body of Christ,*

*and each one of you is a part of it.”*

*(1 Corinthians 12:27)*