

## ASH WEDNESDAY

*Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the season of Lent. It is a time of rebirth and renewal. It is a time in which we, as Christians, consider the meaning of our baptism into Christ and his church. The season of Lent lasts forty days (excluding Sundays). The altar colors are purple to reflect the solemnity and somberness of the season.*

*During this service we are invited to receive the imposition of ashes in the sign of the cross upon our foreheads. The mark of the cross is accompanied by some sobering words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." These words remind us that our entire existence is animated by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. The ashes remind us that one day our family and friends will stand beside our grave and hear these words: "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." But the symbolism of the ashes doesn't stop there, because just as in the ancient world ashes were used to cleanse in the absence of soap, and the fields were burned to give opportunity for new life, so the promise of cleansing and new life come to us through the power and promise of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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*We gather in silence for meditation and prayer...*

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DAY

**PSALM 51:1-17** (read responsively)

### THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

**Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** – Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

**EPISTLE READING** – 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

**GOSPEL READING** – Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

### SERMON

### HYMN

*Lord Jesus, Think on Me*

#599

### INVITATION TO LENT

### CONFESSION OF OUR SINS

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most Holy and Merciful God, **We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole company of heaven that we have sinned by our fault, by our own 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. We have shut our ears 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.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives; our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people; our anger at our own frustrations, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves; our love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work; our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us.

**We confess to you, O God.**

Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrongs we have done. For our neglect of human need and suffering, for our indifference to injustice and cruelty, for all false judgments, for our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, for our waste and pollution of your good creation, and for our lack of concern for those who come after us.

**Accept our repentance, O God.**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

**Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great. Amen.**

### HYMN

*Restore in Us, O God*

#328

### IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*(Those who desire to receive ashes in the sign of the cross on their foreheads may come forward to the altar; return to your seat after receiving the ashes.)*

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.**

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us in eternal life.  
**Amen.**

**PRAYERS**

Merciful God, receive our prayer

**OFFERING**

**HYMN**

*Come to the Table*

#481

**OFFERING PRAYER**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**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.

**DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

*We commune at the rail – you may kneel or stand to receive the bread and wine (light) or juice (dark).*

**POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

**SENDING PRAYER**

Let us pray. Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**BLESSING**

The God who formed us in love, who renews us through grace, and who will transform us into glory, +bless you this day and always.

Amen.

**SENDING HYMN**

*O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days*

#319

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Forgiven, to forgive... Loved, to love... Blessed, to be a blessing.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*Just as we gathered in silence, we now depart in silence...*



**ASH WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 22, 2023**

*St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
727 Eighth Street  
Baraboo, WI*