



TURN UNTO THE LORD YOUR
GOD: FOR HE IS GRACIOUS
AND MERCIFUL, SLOW TO
ANGER, AND OF GREAT
KINDNESS, AND REPENTETH
HIM OF THE EVIL.

JOEL 2:13

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church on this Ash Wednesday. In the light of our Covid-19 protocols, please review some of our guidelines below.

Masks must be worn. We have some available to take if you don't have one. Some are cloth masks and can be taken home to wash and reuse. There are also disposable masks.

Please do not congregate in the Narthex (entrance area) either as you arrive or leave.

To minimize direct contact, we will use the outside aisles only for entry and exit. The center aisle will be used for communion, special needs, or emergency exit.

Ushers will fill the pews from the front to the back of the church and dismiss from the back to the front. Please follow their directions. We are sorry everyone cannot have their usual seat.

NOTE: We can speak the congregational responses behind our masks. Dr. Tony will provide music. The service will be recorded and published to the website. We are now live streaming the service on our church website, www.firststjohn.com

Elders will wear gloves. You can get a bulletin at the check-in table when you walk in. Please do not leave your bulletin in the pew when you exit; take it home or put it in the recycling bin at the front door.

There is a small wooden church just to the right of the main door when you come in. It has a slot for your offering.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take the left set of steps down. The ladies room is at one end of the hallway, and the men's room is at the other. Return to the Narthex using the opposite set of stairs. Please, one person only in the restroom area.

Diaper Changing: A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

First St. John Lutheran Church
2471 Seaman St.
Toledo, OH 43605
419-691-7222 or 419-691-9524

Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor
Dr. Anthony Pattin, Organist

February 17, 2021 11:00 am & 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Prelude Dr. Pattin

(The Congregation stands)

Processional “Savior, When in Dust to You” No. 601

Confession

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.

With that in mind, this year the theme for our Lenten worship will focus upon the journey, and our overall theme will be “Return from Exile: A Lenten Journey.” We begin our journey today wearing sackcloth and ashes while lamenting our sins. We then complete our journey rising with Christ out of Baptism, wearing robes of righteousness.

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 and self-examination.

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: we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

P: By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity; by Your Baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and passion; by Your precious death and burial; by Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

C: Help us, good Lord.

P: In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the day of judgment:

C: Help us, good Lord.

P: We poor sinners implore You

C: to hear us, O Lord.

P: To prosper the teaching of Your Word; to bless our prayer and meditation; to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith; and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:

C: We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P: To draw all to Yourself; to bless those who are instructed in the faith; to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the lonely, the forsaken, the abandoned, and all who stand in need of our prayers; to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy; and to have mercy on us all:

C: We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P: To turn our hearts to You; to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers; and graciously to hear our prayers:

C: We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C: we implore You to hear us.

P: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C: have mercy.

P: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C: grant us Your peace.

(The Congregation is seated)

IMPOSITION OF ASHES (*Those who desire to receive ashes come forward as directed.*)

(The Congregation stands)

P: Accomplish in us, O God, 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, you do not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore, we implore you to grant us true repentance and your Holy Spirit, that those things which we do on this day may please you, 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.**

Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. 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.

C: **Amen.**

(The Congregation is seated)

The Service of the Word

FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion;

sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,

for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near--

²a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds and thick darkness!

Like blackness spread upon the mountains
a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
nor will be again after them
in ages to come.

¹²Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

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;
sanctify a fast;

call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged;

gather the children,
even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations.

Why should it be said among the peoples,
'Where is their God?' "

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

(The Congregation stands for the reading of the Gospel)

Gospel Acclamation (Spoken)

P: Return to the Lord your God, who is gracious and merciful,

C: **slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 6.

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

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "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.

²"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. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵"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. ⁶But 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.

¹⁶"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.

¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so 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.

¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Gospel Response (Spoken)

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

(The Congregation is seated)

Sermon "Sackcloth and Ashes to Robes of Righteousness"

Pastor Rayl

Hymn "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me"

No. 623

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Offering

Musical Offertory

Dr. Pattin

(The Congregation stands)

The Great Thanksgiving

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.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. You call people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

The Words of Institution

P: In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord 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."

The Lord's Prayer *(prayed by all)*

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 Congregation is seated)

The Communion – *(Follow the directions for distribution.)*

All baptized Christians, believing our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's table. Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing.

If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.

(After all have returned to their seats, the Congregation stands.)

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and sustain you in God's grace.

C: Amen.

P: 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.

C: Amen.

Benediction

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.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Recessional *"O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days"* No. 319
Postlude Dr. Pattin

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Welcome to all who are worshipping with us in the name of Jesus Christ.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of the Lenten Season. Its name "Ash" reminds us of our mortality, that one day we shall be "ashes to ashes." But our Lenten journey leads us past Ash Wednesday, to include messages for each Wednesday during the Lenten season, all the way to the empty tomb of Easter.

Don't forget that worship continues each Wednesday during Lent. We have services on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., both in the church. Please join us.

ELDERS: Dick Haar, Bob Hecklinger

Sign of Death and Life

Soaring buildings of steel and concrete--these can smolder into ravines of ash. Damp, green forests of moss-cloaked trees can burn into ash-covered skeletal remains. Mountain peaks can detonate from buried, churning cauldrons that carry ash skyward and drop it on meadows and beaches miles away. Fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, sons and daughters--they too give bones and flesh, warm blood and familiar voice over to ash. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust" says the pastor, standing by a hole in the ground. There is a place like this for all of us.

An uncomfortable gloominess pesters us on this day, Ash Wednesday. Without hesitation the sober announcement finds our ears and more importantly our hearts: "Remember that you are dust." Many of us will be marked on our brows with the same symbol that signed us at our baptism. The sign of the cross will be impressed upon our flesh. However today the imprint is gray ash, the remains of dying embers, and not the oil of anointing for someone freshly risen from baptismal water.

How is it that we come to this place of worship and take on this awfully transformed symbol? The joyous, watery, baptismal birth mark is changed into the fearful, gritty Ash Wednesday death mark. Is there not enough ruin and sorrow in our lives and in our world without welcoming its imprint here in worship?

Yet isn't it precisely here that we need to encounter this sign of mortality? Here, in the shadow of the cross, we can accept this truth. For to honestly face our death is to begin meeting the wonder of life in Christ. "Send me the grace my spirit needs," we pray with Martin Luther (LBW 295), "without it I am nothing." To admit that we are indeed helplessly sinful, sliding toward death, is the first step toward repentance and reclaiming our baptismal birthright.