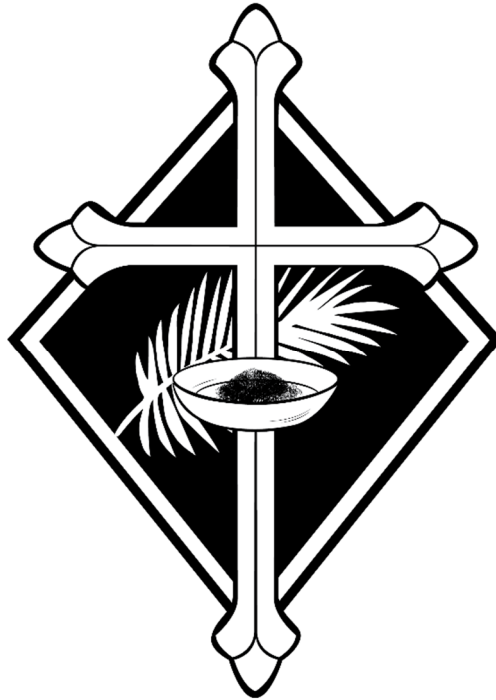


Ash Wednesday

Divine Service with the Imposition of Ashes



Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

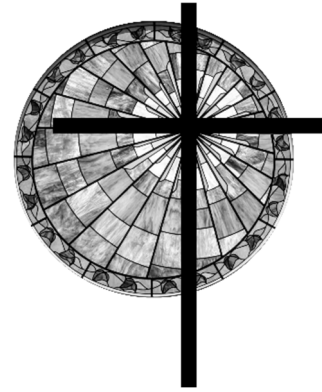
—Joel 2:13

EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A congregation of the English District,
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod*

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Welcome to Epiphany Lutheran Church!

**Here is where Jesus answers His promise to be with us always,
by coming to us in His living and active Word and the
Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood.**

Welcome, visitors! We are glad to have you with us this morning as the Lord comes to us to give His gifts of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. The resources of Epiphany are at your disposal. If you need assistance, the ushers are glad to help. Please make sure to introduce yourself to our Pastor and congregation, and join us after the service for fellowship and Bible Study!

Parents of Small Children: We are very happy that you are here today, honoring Our Lord's Words: "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Lk. 18:16). If you feel you must step out with a fussy child, please hurry back! Like Jesus, we want your children in the Divine Service, not out.

The Sacrament of the Altar is offered at Epiphany every Lord's Day and every Wednesday evening. The normal communicant is a confirmed member of a congregation of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS). Under no circumstances should an un-baptized person commune. **If you are not a member of an LCMS congregation, or have not communed at Epiphany before, please speak with the Pastor or an Elder before the service begins.**



If you need help hearing the service, the sanctuary is equipped with a hearing loop, a special type of sound system that connects directly to hearing aids. Simply set your hearing aid to "T" (telecoil) to connect.

On Ash Wednesday and the Imposition of Ashes

Prior to beginning the Easter Feast, the Church fasts during the season of Lent. Though this is not necessarily a fast of food, it is a fast of the unrestrained joy of things like the angelic hymn, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the use of the word of praise, "Alleluia." The Lenten fast begins today, a day known as Ash Wednesday. The Latin name *dies cinerum*, day of ashes, comes from the name of one of the day's defining ceremonies, the Imposition of Ashes. During the Imposition of Ashes, the Pastor places ashes, in the shape of a cross, on the foreheads of those who desire them. They are a sign of repentance, but also a confession that our sin has been paid for by Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Ash Wednesday, as we know it, dates from at least the eighth century. One of the earliest descriptions of the day, aside from liturgical books, comes from Anglo-Saxon abbot Ælfric (955-1020). In his *Lives of the Saints*, he writes: "We read in the books both in the Old Law and in the New that the men who repented of their sins bestrewed themselves with ashes and clothed their bodies with sackcloth. Now let us do this little thing at the beginning of our Lent that we strew ashes upon our heads to signify that we ought to repent of our sins during the Lenten fast."

The likely origin of the Imposition of Ashes is that it was not intended for all the faithful, but only for those who had committed gross public sins and were under church discipline. They would come to the church on Ash Wednesday, make confession of their sins, have ashes sprinkled on their heads, receive clothing of sackcloth, and pray aloud the seven penitential Psalms (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). After this, the bishop said to the penitents, "Behold, we drive you from the doors of the church by reason of your sins and crimes, as Adam, the first man, was driven out of paradise because of his transgression." The doors were shut and the penitents were not allowed to enter until Maundy Thursday, when they came and received absolution.

However, by the eleventh century this practice was done away with. Since that time, all the faithful have been marked with the ashes as a sign of repentance. Today the ashes are placed upon those desiring them in different ways, depending on countries. The American custom is to have the ashes placed on the forehead in the shape of a cross, while in several European countries it is customary to have ashes sprinkled on the head.

Even though this practice of having ashes placed on our heads on a fixed day in the Church Year is relatively new, the connection of ash and repentance is ancient. The placement of ashes on one's body is an outer manifestation of inner repentance or mourning. It is mentioned several times in the Old Testament, most notably in the book of Job. Job, having been rebuked by God, confesses "Therefore I despise myself and

repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6). Even Jesus Himself connects ashes and repentance, saying, “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (Mt. 11:21).

On Ash Wednesday, those who desire to receive the ashes are invited to come to the Altar, as at Communion. *It is not mandatory that anyone receive ashes. This is a practice left to Christian freedom.* The Pastor applies the ashes, made of the palms from the Palm Sunday of last year, in the shape of a cross on the forehead with the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” These are the words of Genesis 3:19, what God said to Adam and Eve after they had eaten the forbidden fruit and fell into sin. These words indicated to our first parents the bitter fruit of their sin: death. For us, these words remind us of our sinfulness and our mortality, and, thus, our need to repent. However, we do not hear these words without hope. We know the full story. Ash Wednesday leads us to Good Friday, which is followed by Easter. We repent, but we do so confident in the forgiveness won by the cross (hence the shape of the ashes), given to us freely by Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whether you choose to receive ashes or not, the symbolism is powerful. We begin this season of repentance with its chief outward sign. Regardless of the ash’s presence, we pray that the Holy Spirit would create in us new and contrite hearts that turn from sin and seek to live lives pleasing to God. May He keep us as we begin our Lenten journey to the cross and empty tomb!



✠ IMPOSITION OF ASHES ✠

Please **STAND**.

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

O God, who desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he turn from his wickedness and live, we beseech You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature and, of Your goodness, deign to bless and sanctify these ashes which will be put on our heads as a sign of our humility and Your pardon of our sins, that we, who acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return because of our vileness may, by Your mercy, worthily receive both the pardon of all our sins and the reward which You promise to those who are penitent; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The Pastor blesses the Ashes, saying:

P Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Ashes are distributed at the Baptismal Font. Those who desire ashes may form a line at the Font. As the ashes are put on the forehead in the shape of a cross, the Pastor says, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." After you have received the ashes, please return to your seat. Those who do not desire ashes may be seated.

HYMN DURING THE IMPOSITION

"Savior, When in Dust to Thee," 419

*After the hymn has concluded, please **STAND**.*

PRAYER

P The Lord be with you.

C And with your spirit.

P Let us pray.

Grant, we beseech You, O Lord, that we who now with prayer and fasting put on the armor of our Christian warfare may be defended against all spiritual wickedness and at the last obtain the victory; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Please **BE SEATED**.

HYMN

“O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days,” 418

✠ **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION** ✠

Please **STAND**.

P Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

C Who made heaven and earth.

P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

P Since we are gathered to hear God’s Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Silence is kept for self-examination according to the Ten Commandments.

C Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

✠ **SERVICE OF THE WORD** ✠

INTROIT

Psalm 57:1-3a; antiphon: Wisdom 11:24-26



P You have mercy on | all, O Lord, *

and abhor nothing | You have made.

You look past the sins of men that they | may repent; *

You spare all because they are Yours, and You are the Lov- | er of souls.

C Be merciful to me, O God, be merci- | ful to me, *
for in You my soul takes | refuge;
in the shadow of Your wings I will take | refuge, *
till the storms of destruction | pass by.

P I cry out to | God Most High, *
to God who fulfills His purpose | for me.
He will send from heaven and | save me. *
God will send out His steadfast love and His | faithfulness.

C Glory be to the Father and | to the Son *
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning, *
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

P You have mercy on | all, O Lord, *
and abhor nothing | You have made.
You look past the sins of men that they | may repent; *
You spare all because they are Yours, and You are the Lov- | er of souls.

KYRIE

P O Lord,
C have mercy upon us.

P O Christ,
C have mercy upon us.

P O Lord,
C have mercy upon us.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hates nothing You have made and forgives the sins of all who are penitent, create in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain from You, the God of all mercy, perfect remission 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.

Please **BE SEATED**.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Joel 2:12-19

“Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. Who knows if He will 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 sacred assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room. Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, “Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’ ” Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people. The LORD will answer and say to His people, “Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL

Psalm 57:1, 3



P Be merciful to me, O God, be merci- | ful to me, *
For my soul | trusts in You.

C The Lord shall send from heaven and | save me; *
He reproaches one who would swal- | low me up.

EPISTLE READING

1 John 1:5-10

Beloved: This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

TRACT

Psalm 103:10; 79:8-9



P O Lord, deal not with us according | to our sins, *
Nor punish us according to our in- | iquities.

C O Lord, do not remember former iniquities a- | gainst us; *
let Your tender mercies come speedily to meet us, for we have been brought |
very low.

Help us, O God of our Salvation, for the glory of Your Name, | O Lord, *
And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, for Your | Name's sake.

Please **STAND**.

HOLY GOSPEL

St. Matthew 6:16-21

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

At that time, Jesus spoke to His disciples, saying: "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 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."

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

NICENE CREED

C I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,

by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life † of the world to come. Amen.

Please **BE SEATED**.

CHIEF HYMN

“From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee,” 607

SERMON

Please **STAND**.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Each petition concludes:

P Lord, in Your mercy,
C hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude:

P ...one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Please **BE SEATED**.

VOLUNTARY

During the voluntary, the Celebrant prepares the Altar for the Supper. You are encouraged to prepare your heart and mind for Holy Communion. Psalms 34, 42, 84, and 116 are especially suitable. Your offering may be deposited in the plate located near the Baptismal Font when you go to the Altar for Holy Communion.

✠ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT ✠

Please **STAND**.

PREFACE

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 truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.



Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho-san - na to the Lord;



Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

P Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

At Your command, Abraham prepared to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice on the mountain; yet, in mercy You provided a ram as a substitute. We give You thanks that on Calvary You spared not Your only Son but sent Him to offer His life as a ransom for many.

As we eat and drink His Body and Blood, grant us, like Abraham our father, to trust in Your promise now fulfilled in Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER

C 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

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My Body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My Blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI

P The ✠ peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

AGNUS DEI



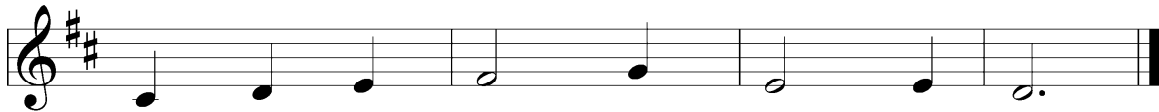
1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,



You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;



O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,



Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

Please **BE SEATED.**

THE DISTRIBUTION OF OUR LORD'S BODY AND BLOOD

DISTRIBUTION HYMN


"Jesus Sinners Doth Receive," 609




Remember man
that you are
dust and into
dust you shall
return.

Please **STAND**.


NUNC DIMITTIS




C 1 O Lord, now let Your ser - vant De -
2 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, All




part in heav'n - ly peace, For I have seen the
glo - ry to the Son, All glo - ry to the



glo - ry Of Your re - deem - ing grace:
Spir - it, For - ev - er Three - in - One;



A light to lead the Gen - tiles Un -
For as in the be - gin - ning, Is



to Your ho - ly hill, The glo - ry of Your
now, shall ev - er be, God's tri - une name re -



peo - ple, Your cho - sen Is - ra - el.
sound - ing Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

POST COMMUNION COLLECT

P O God the Father, Fount and Source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have granted us pardon and peace in this Sacrament; and we implore You not to forsake Your children, but evermore to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the same Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

BENEDICAMUS AND BENEDICTION

P Let us bless the Lord.

C 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 look upon you with favor and give you ☩ peace.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

“Jesus, Refuge of the Weary,” 423