

Welcome to
St. Peter's Lutheran Church
202 Van Buren Street
Evans City, Pennsylvania 16033-1127
(724) 538-5810



A Service of Confession and Repentance

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.

Psalms 42:1

*February 18, 2026
7 pm Worship Service
Pastor Brandon Johns*

The Meaning of Ash Wednesday

As you prepare for worship, give careful thought to the meaning of Ash Wednesday and its significance for your life.

Ash Wednesday is the church's point of entry onto the road that leads through the Lenten season to Good Friday and Easter. The mood of Ash Wednesday, as with the entire Lenten season, is decidedly somber. A call is sounded for confession and repentance.

Ashes rubbed on the forehead, a custom carried over from Old Testament times, brings to recognition that human sinfulness, with all its natural tendencies toward self-preservation, are to be reduced to nothing. As ashes mark fire's progress, so God's presence in a person's life is to be marked by the death and elimination of all that is burdensome to life.

PRELUDE

A Lenten Melody

Gilbert M. Martin

PSALM 51 (*read responsively*)

R: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my offenses,
and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only have I sinned and have done what is evil in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.

Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my mother's womb.

Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom deep within.

Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken may rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my wickedness.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

Let me teach your ways to offenders,
and sinners shall be restored to you.

Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.
you are not pleased with burnt offering.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a troubled and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Favor Zion with your good pleasure;
build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will delight in the appointed sacrifices,
in burnt and whole offerings;
then young bulls shall be offered upon your altar.

ANTHEM *Are You Washed in the Blood of the Lamb?* Elisha A. Hoffman

EXHORTATION

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. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and 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 his 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 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 path and confess your sins asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

Most holy and merciful Father:

We confess to you, 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.

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.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

we confess to you, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

we confess to you, Lord.

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

we confess to you, Lord.

Our unchecked love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

we confess to you, Lord.

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

we confess to you, Lord.

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,

accept our repentance, Lord.

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

accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

accept our repentance, Lord.

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

Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen.

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— a 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.

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend 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. 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; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather 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. Between 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?'"

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10

We entreat 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.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

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

The holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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

“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. But 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.

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

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

This is the Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: Lord Jesus, Think on Me

1 Lord Je - sus, think on me, and purge a - way my sin;
2 Lord Je - sus, think on me, by anx - ious thoughts op - pressed;
3 Lord Je - sus, think on me, nor let me go a - stray;
4 Lord Je - sus, think on me, that, when the flood is past,

from self - ish pas - sions set me free and make me pure with - in.
let me your lov - ing ser - vant be and taste your prom - ised rest.
through dark - ness and per - plex - i - ty point out your cho - sen way.
I may the e - ter - nal bright - ness see and share your joy at last.

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system has four vocal lines and a piano accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The piano part uses a variety of chords and textures, including block chords and moving lines.

BLESSING OF THE ASHES

Lord, bless now these ashes. They are made from the burnt palms of last Palm Sunday mixed with the ashes of our sins we have laid before you tonight. Let them be a reminder and a symbol that in your presence our self-centeredness and our will to live for ourselves are to be burned and consumed as by fire. Set fire to all our selfishness. Turn it to a charred wasteland. Raise up new life, life as can be found only with you, life which is outward directed, and filled with a love that you alone can give. **Amen.**



LITANY OF REPENTANCE *(responsively)*

In the Book of Revelation, John records visions of the culminating cosmic battle between the forces of the world and the divine forces of God. Those who have given in to the ways and authority of the world over and against God's kingdom and the Way are given a mark, known as the mark of the beast. This mark stands in opposition to the baptismal and penitential mark of the Cross.

Shall we continue to wear the beast's mark on our foreheads?

I cannot serve God and the beast.

Shall we continue to give in to our old way of life?

I cannot serve God and the beast.

Shall we continue to allow God to be less than the focus of our attention?

I cannot serve God and the beast.

Shall we continue to allow others to lead us around blindly?

I cannot serve God and the beast.

Shall we continue to use others just to make ourselves feel good?

I cannot serve God and the beast.

Shall we return to the ease of forgetfulness?

I cannot serve God and the beast.

What way is left to go?

Turn to God and burn out the mark of the beast.

What is the cry of creation?

Turn to God and burn out the mark of the beast.

What is the call of the Lord of history?

Turn to God and burn out the mark of the beast.

How can you free yourself from the powers of evil?

Turn to God and burn out the mark of the beast.

What will you tell your brothers and sisters?

Turn to God and burn out the mark of the beast.

What do you intend to do?

Turn to God and burn out the mark of the beast.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

You may meditate on Psalm 90 while others are going up for imposition or sing the hymns.

The ashes used during the Confession this evening are ashes from last year's palms, symbolizing the shortness of life, joy turned into sorrow. If you desire to receive ashes as a sign of humility and repentance, simply come forward in a single line. As Pastor places the ashes on your forehead, he will say:

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
(from Ecclesiastes 3:20)

During and After the Imposition of Ashes:

Just a Closer Walk with Thee



Refrain Just a clos - er walk with thee, grant it, Je - sus, is my plea;
1 I am weak but thou art strong: Je - sus, keep me from all wrong;
2 Through this world of toil and snares, if I fal - ter, Lord, who cares?
3 When my fee - ble life is o'er, time for me will be no more;



dai - ly walk - ing close to thee, let it be, dear Lord, let it be.
I'll be sat - is - fied as long as I walk, let me walk close to thee. *Ref.*
Who with me my bur - den shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee. *Ref.*
guide me gent - ly, safe - ly o'er to thy king - dom shore, to thy shore. *Ref.*



Beneath the Cross of Jesus



1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I long to take my stand;
2 Up - on the cross of Je - sus, my eye at times can see
3 I take, O cross, your shad - ow for my a - bid - ing place;



the shad - ow of a might - y rock with - in a wea - ry land,
the ver - y dy - ing form of one who suf - fered there for me.
I ask no oth - er sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face;



a home with - in a wil - der - ness, a rest up - on the way,
And from my con - trite heart, with tears, two won - ders I con - fess:
con - tent to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,



from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat and bur - dens of the day.
the . . . won - der of his glo - rious love and my un - wor - thi - ness.
my . . . sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all, the cross.

CONCLUSION OF CONFESSION

After all have received ashes and both hymns are sung, the service continues

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 Lord,

bring us with all your saints to the joy of His resurrection.

DECLARATION OF GRACE

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that we may turn from our waywardness and live. Therefore, we pray God to grant us true repentance and His Holy Spirit, that those things may please Him which we do on this day, 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. **Amen.**

PERIOD OF SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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 with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

OFFERING

Our in-person offerings are made before or after the worship service. The offering plates are located near the entrances to the nave.

OFFERTORY



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, **O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of Him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and 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.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and help us to pray:
**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**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Let us share now in the heavenly banquet that has no end.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

The congregation is invited to come forward to the rail for communion.

BLESSING

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and
keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER

Compassionate God, your Son welcomed sinners and ate with
them. We give you thanks for the forgiveness and grace we have
received in this meal. Make us signs of your love, that all the world
may know your mercy and blessing; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

May you who share in Christ’s sufferings also know the power of his resurrection. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SILENCE FOR REFLECTION *As candles are extinguished*

DISMISSAL

Forgiven and strengthened at the table of mercy, go now in peace to love and serve the Lord with joy. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE *Jesus, My All* Roger C. Wilson

Prayer before the journey:

All-seeing God, you know our motives as well as our deeds; nothing we think or do is a secret from you. May our piety grow out of our love for you, our generosity out of genuine care for others, our prayers out of deep thankfulness for the treasures you entrust to our stewardship. Guide our time of fasting and self-examination toward the deepening of our faith and the effectiveness of our service, in Christ’s name. Amen.

Prayers Have Been Requested Recently for the Following:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Cole Barkley | Luke Clawson | Mary Fulghum |
| Berty McMillen | Rick Reifenstein | Kerren Morra |
| Stephanie Hogan | Annastyn Hogan | Roland Wise |
| Demetrius Litsakis | The McHenrys | Pat Wolfe |
| Jim Bucci | David English | Carl Riddle |
| Bill Wack | The O’hidnicki Family | |
| The Family of Jason Sarver | | |

Meager Meals & Service – will be held weekly starting Thursday, February 26th. Soup and bread will be served starting at 6 pm and the service will follow at 7 pm. Please sign up to contribute to our gathering by donating soup and/or bread for these meals as you are able.

Lent Special Offering – Our offerings made during Meager Meals and in the Lent Special Offering envelopes will go to Priority Projects, which currently is being used to fund our basement bathrooms renovation project. Heading into the project, which should begin in about a week, we have the 50% deposit on hand in the Priority Projects, which is a great start, but then will work towards having funding for the rest by the time the work is accomplished.

Fasting for Change – This Lent consider not just the discipline of giving something up, but also giving something toward. As part of your Lenten journey, you are invited to donate the money you would have spent on what you have given up to support Lutheran Service Society. LSS is a collective ministry of our synod and helps people in a variety of ways, including providing adoption and foster care services for children and families in our area. Coin boxes will be available or you are welcome to mark the Other line on your contribution envelope. You may choose to donate weekly, or give the sum of your savings at the end of Lent.

Fish Fry – Friday, March 20th from 4 - 6:30 pm.



ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

is a congregation of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

ELCA Presiding Bishop

SWPA Synod Bishop

Pastor

Organist & Music Director

Sexton

Acolyte

Assistant Minister

Lector

Tech Support

Ushers

The Rev. Yehiel Curry

The Rev. Melissa Stohler

The Rev. Brandon Johns

Marlene Domhoff

Joe Ludwik

Anna Johns

Teresa O'Malley

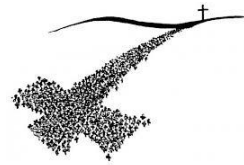
Marsha Reedy

Lily Johns

Joe Ludwik & Brian Johns

Welcome to St. Peter's

We are thankful that you are here to worship with other Christians today. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray that your worship experience will fill you with the grace and mercy of Almighty God through his Holy Spirit.



Newcomers and Guests

New to St. Peter's? Please sign the GUEST REGISTER behind the last pew. You are welcome to commune with us if that is your practice. A handicapped accessible RESTROOM is located near the Van Buren Street entrance (through Luther Hall, past the kitchen, restroom is on the left in the foyer).

Nursery – Tonight the nursery is self-serve and available for children and caregivers. Exit the rear of the nave and follow the steps to the basement, the nursery is on the left. The service can be heard through an intercom in the nursery. There are activity bags in the back of the sanctuary and children's bulletins geared for children ages 5 and up are at the nave entrances.

Offering – Thank you for supporting our ministries! Plates are available at the front and rear of the nave to receive offering, or you if you prefer, we have Venmo as an option. If you choose to use Venmo, please note how you would like the funds to be designated, like for Current Fund, etc.

Peters LCEC
@Peters-LCEC



venmo

Staying in Touch:

Office hours are Monday through Friday from 9 am until noon.

Please feel free to contact us by phone or internet:

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RECOGNITION OF ARTISTS:

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