



ASH WEDNESDAY AT HOME

Resurrection Lutheran Church
February 17, 2021

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Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.

Before you begin...

- **Think about where you will gather.** Will you sit at your kitchen table, in the family room, or somewhere else? Make sure everyone can participate comfortably.
- **Make your space sacred.** Light a candle (or two or three), and make sure you have a Bible handy for the scripture readings. If you have a cross, put it in a central place.
- **Choose leaders and readers.** Some parts of this liturgy work better if one person does most of the reading and others respond. Someone will need to read scripture, too. You can look through and assign those parts ahead of time or pick someone as you go. Additional copies of this liturgy can be downloaded from our website.
- **How will you use this?** The included confession and imposition of ashes may be used as part of this liturgy or along with the Ash Wednesday video that is available on our website (rlcindy.org/worship) or our Facebook page. If using this with the video, go directly to the "Invitation to Lent."

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

📖 Amen.

First Lesson

Joel 2:1–2, 12–17

Because of the coming Day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

¹Blow 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?’ ”

Psalm

Psalm 51

The psalm may be read in unison or divided between two groups or between a leader and others.

- ¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.
- ²**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,
and cleanse me | from my sin.**
- ³For I know | my offenses,
and my sin is ev- | er before me.
- ⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment.**
- ⁵Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my | mother’s womb.
- ⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**
- ⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.
- ⁸**Let me hear | joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**
- ⁹Hide your face | from my sins,
and blot out | all my wickedness.
- ¹⁰**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- | it within me.**
- ¹¹Cast me not away | from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.
- ¹²**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.**

- ¹³Let me teach your ways | to offenders,
and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.
- ¹⁴**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**
- ¹⁵O Lord, o- | pen my lips,
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.
- ¹⁶**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.
You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**
- ¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise.

Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“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.”

If you have watched the Ash Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer video, you can begin here with the Invitation to Lent.

Invitation to Lent

Select someone to read this invitation to Lent.

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Confession of Sin

The confession may be read silently or aloud if alone. If you are worshiping with others, the leader part may be read by one person or shared among the group.

℣ Most holy and merciful God,

☩ **we confess to you and to one another,
and before the whole company of heaven,
that we have sinned by our fault,
by our own fault,
by our own most grievous 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, O God.**

ℒ 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.**

ℒ Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

☩ **Have mercy on us, O God.**

ℒ Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

☩ **Have mercy on us, O God.**

ℒ Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

☩ **Have mercy on us, O God.**

ℒ Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

☩ **Have mercy on us, O God.**

ℒ Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

☩ **Have mercy on us, O God.**

ℒ Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

☩ **Have mercy on us, O God.**

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

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

Imposition of Ashes

ℒ Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

☩ **Amen.**

To apply the ashes to yourself or another, simply touch your thumb or forefinger to the ashes and then make a cross on the forehead. If your finger is too dry to pick up the ashes, you can moisten your fingertip with olive oil or something similar by pouring a small amount of oil on a cotton ball or paper towel and touching your finger to it.

As ashes are applied to the forehead say these words:

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

After all who desire have received the ashes, conclude with these words:

- L** Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
- C** **that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

- L** By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,
- C** **bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

- L** 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.
- C** **Amen.**

Blessing

- L** God, who fills the creation with abundance,
Christ, who spreads his arms in forgiveness,
Holy Spirit, who draws ever near to us,
✠ bless us and bring us to life everlasting.
- C** **Amen.**

Dismissal

- L** Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness;
be of good courage;
hold fast to that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honor people;
love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the holy Spirit.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**