

February 18, 2026



ASH

Wednesday

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

Psalm 51:10, NRSV

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE

WELCOME

OPENING REFLECTION

OPENING HYMN

Chief of Sinners Though I Be ELW #609

(Vs. 1, 2 & 5)

Public Domain

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE - *Have Mercy*

ELW page 203

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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

FIRST CHOIR

To Dust

Arr. Marroli

One License #100934

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

FIRST READING—Isaiah 58:1-12

Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and clothing the naked. Sincere repentance will lead to a dramatic improvement of their condition.

¹ Shout out; do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;

they ask of me righteous judgments;
they want God on their side.

³ “Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day
and oppress all your workers.

⁴ You fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you;
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹ The LORD will guide you continually
and satisfy your needs in parched places
and make your bones strong,

and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God!

PSALM—Psalm 51:1-17

¹ Have 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.**

³ For I know my offenses,
and my sin is ever 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.**

⁵ Indeed, 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.**

⁷ Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

⁸ **Let me hear joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my wickedness.

¹⁰ **Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**

¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² **Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

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

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

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

^{20b} We entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1} As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ² For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! ³ We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷ truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸ in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true, ⁹ as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed, ¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God!

The Holy Gospel according to the sixth chapter of Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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 righteousness 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. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so 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. ⁶ 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.

¹⁶ “And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ 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.

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

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

HYMN OF THE DAY

Just As I Am, without One Plea ELW #592

(Vs. 1, 2 & 4)

Public Domain

INVITATION TO LENT

The assembly is seated. The presiding minister may invite the assembly into the discipline of 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

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 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.

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.

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

Have mercy on us, O God.

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

Have mercy on us, O God.

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.

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

Have mercy on us, O God.

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.

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.

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

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

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

When ashes are used in the service, the presiding minister may say the following prayer.

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.

*People may come forward and kneel or stand to receive the ashes.
Ministers mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:
Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

*During this time, hymns or penitential psalms may be sung, or silence may be kept.
Psalm 51 may be sung if it has not been used earlier in the service.
After those who desire ashes have received them, all may kneel or sit, and the minister 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 Savior,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.
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.

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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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**

THE PRAYERS

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

Guide your church, O God. Accompany all Christians in this season of repentance, and renew our faith in the riches of grace you give to us in baptism.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heal this earth, O God. Satisfy the needs of every parched place, every diverse ecosystem, every suffering creature. Though all return to dust, grant beauty and purpose to each living thing.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Restore the nations, O God. Let your healing spring up quickly across the world. Give all in authority the will to loose the bonds of injustice and let any who are oppressed go free.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Deliver your people, O God. Comfort any whose hearts are rent by grief, uphold any who are sick, bring food to those who hunger, and give housing to all without shelter.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Bless this assembly, O God. Reconcile us to one another and to you. Strengthen our resolve to fast from evil, open our hands in sharing, and quicken our prayer.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Hold us forever, O God. We thank you for all who now know their treasure in heaven, and for all who on earth proclaimed your abounding, steadfast love.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

Amen.

OFFERING

Gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS AND TITHES

OFFERTORY HYMN

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross ELW #803

(Vs. 4)

Public Domain

OFFERTORY PRAYER

O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.
Through these gifts of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW page 144

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Holy, holy, holy ELW page 144

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table.

Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

Lamb of God ELW page 146

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of our salvation,
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.
Through the body and blood of your Son,
may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

SENDING

The God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:

God, who calls all things into existence,

Jesus Christ, who redeems us,

and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,

✝ bless you now and always.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Be Thou My Vision ELW #793

(Vs. 1 & 2)

Public Domain

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Welcome to First Lutheran Church

*Whether you are looking for a place of worship
or are just passing through, we hope our service has blessed you
on your journey as your presence has been a blessing to us.*

A Prayer for Ash Wednesday

We forget sometimes that ashes come from fire,
That this soft black powder was once a firm green frond,
Bright and vibrant before it became dry and brittle,
Stiff and fibrous before a flame transformed it into dust.

Every living thing submits to change.

Let's not fear it.

From seed to plant, palm to ash,
This bit of the earth smudged on our foreheads today
Was carried lovingly in the hands of the Creator.

What fires will we step into this Lent?

What new forms will our souls take
When we encounter the holy blaze of the Living God?

We are—it is true—ash to ash and dust to dust,
But whether in youth or in old age, in life or in death,

Let us be assured,

We are held, and we are God's.

Amen.

First Lutheran Church

116 Inner Drive

Le Sueur, MN 56058

507-665-2615

Rev. Samuel Mailleue

office@firstlutheranlesueur.org

www.firstlutheranlesueur.org

UNITED by Christ, God call us to LOVE one another
As we RECEIVE, DISCOVER and PROCLAIM God's Word.

Worship Assistants

Organist/Pianist:	Virginia Miller
First Choir Director:	Jennifer Weick
Acolytes:	Everett Greisen
Reader:	Ian Mailleue
Usher:	Chuck Frauendienst
Greeters:	Liz Osborne
Communion Asst:	LeRoy & Joan May
Council Member:	Lynnea Libra
Fellowship:	
Projection:	Tech Team
Audio:	Tech Team
Videographer:	Becky Pollack
Altar Guild:	Marie Walker



Acknowledgements:

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2023 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS103321—5/31/2026

One License—#A-716694—2/12/2026

Annual License with Podcast/Streaming

All rights reserved

CCLI—ccli.com

Copyright License #2540397—Expires 6/30/2026

Streaming License #20643840—Expires 6/30/2026

Songselect Advanced—Expires 6/30/2026

Shift Worship—Membership

Expires 12/25/2026

Sharefaith—Membership

Expires 6/2026

Church ArtPro—Account #74057560

Expires 12/15/2027