



Ash Wednesday

OUR SAVIOR  
LUTHERAN CHURCH



## SERVICE OF THE WORD: ASH WEDNESDAY

### GATHERING: THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

#### WELCOME

Pastor Jim Kruse

#### GREETING

PM: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, † one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the community of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

PM: Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God,

**C: 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.**

#### PSALM 51:1-17

AM: <sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your <sup>1</sup>steadfast love;

**C: in your great compassion blot out <sup>1</sup>my offenses.**

AM: <sup>2</sup>Wash me through and through <sup>1</sup>from my wickedness,

**C: and cleanse me <sup>1</sup>from my sin.**

AM: <sup>3</sup>For I know <sup>1</sup>my offenses,

**C: and my sin is ev- <sup>1</sup>er before me.**

AM: <sup>4</sup>Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil <sup>1</sup>in your sight;

**C: so you are justified when you speak and right <sup>1</sup>in your judgment.**

AM: <sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born <sup>1</sup>steeped in wickedness,

**C: a sinner from my <sup>1</sup>mother's womb.**

AM: <sup>6</sup>Indeed, you delight in truth <sup>1</sup>deep within me,

**C: and would have me know wisdom <sup>1</sup>deep within.**

AM: <sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I <sup>1</sup>shall be clean;

**C: wash me, and I shall be pur- <sup>1</sup>er than snow.**

AM: <sup>8</sup>Let me hear <sup>1</sup>joy and gladness;

**C: that the body you have broken <sup>1</sup>may rejoice.**

AM: <sup>9</sup>Hide your face <sup>1</sup>from my sins,

**C: and blot out <sup>1</sup>all my wickedness.**

AM: <sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean <sup>1</sup>heart, O God,

**C: and renew a right spir- <sup>1</sup>it within me.**

AM: <sup>11</sup>Cast me not away | from your presence,  
**C: and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.**  
AM: <sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of | your salvation  
**C: and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.**  
AM: <sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways | to offenders,  
**C: and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.**  
AM: <sup>14</sup>Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,  
**C: and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**  
AM: <sup>15</sup>O Lord, o- | pen my lips,  
**C: and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.**  
AM: <sup>16</sup>For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.  
**C: You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**  
AM: <sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;  
**C: a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise.**

## FIRST LESSON

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

<sup>1</sup>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—<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>12</sup>Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>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?

<sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; <sup>16</sup>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.

<sup>17</sup>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?’ ”

AM: Word of God, word of life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

## SECOND LESSON

2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10

<sup>20b</sup>We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup>As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup>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! <sup>3</sup>We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup>truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors,

and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

AM: Word of God, word of life. C: Thanks be to God.

## THE GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

Jesus said to the disciples: <sup>1</sup>“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.

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

<sup>5</sup>“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. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>“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. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>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.

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

PM: The Gospel of the Lord. C: Praise to you, O Christ.

## SERMON

*Where is Your Treasure?*

Pastor Jim Kruse

This finely crafted wooden box sits prominently on the top of my dresser in my bedroom at home. In fact, I don't think it has ever left the house until today when I brought it here to make this video. This box contains ashes, the little bit of dust that remains from the life that was our first Golden Retriever puppy. His name was Ollie. For more than a decade, from 2004 to 2013, Ollie was my best friend. Unlike the therapy dogs that we now raise and train for their work of comforting children and adults in need, Ollie was a strong, independent, athletic dog whose only work in life was to play as hard he could for as long as he could. And then to stay as close to me as possible, waiting for his next opportunity. He was a great friend and more courageous than I will ever be. And I still miss him very much.

I am not sure why I keep this container of ashes close at hand. I just know that, if put this box into a closet or drawer, or if I carefully spread the contents under a tree in the yard—if I do not rise from sleep every morning to see this box when I first open my eyes, I will be diminished in some important way.

I do know it is not because I am trying to hold onto some little portion Ollie for fear that I will forget him, or that it eases my sense of loss in some way. That's not it. No, I think this beautiful box of ashes is more of a reminder that, even if what remains of Ollie is only ash-

es, it is still ashes. It is still something of the earth. It is a reminder that, for a few short years, a life took up space in this world, and was sustained by the food and water that this world provides. And that because of this life, I am different, and the world is different, than it otherwise would have been. As fragile and as fleeting and as fraught with danger life is, life still matters. Every life matters. Matter matters to God! Maybe that's it!

I said this at Easter last year, and I said it at Christmas a few months ago, and I will say it again today: This may be the most unusual Ash Wednesday you will ever experience in your lifetime. The usual calls of Lent, the call to set aside the busy-ness of your life, to simplify what is overwhelming and complex, to refrain from satisfying your appetites for the extra pleasures of life—these things do not have the power over us that they once did. Because if we worked at doing these things this year, life would not be that much different than it already is.

The self-isolation and restrictive life-style of life under the COVID pandemic are already a perpetual Lenten experience. We do not need to be reminded that we are mortals when a half a million fellow Americans have lost their lives to this disease during the past year. We do not need to be reminded of our vulnerability as creatures of God's creation when violence and human selfishness threaten us from every side.

This year, we have an opportunity to be reminded that the opposite is also true. This year our disciplines of Lent can be about honestly facing up to the reality that the fact that we exist at all is a miracle beyond comprehension, that just being alive, just waking up each morning from our daily dalliance with death, is the surest sign of God's love and grace. Instead of fasting from the blessings and pleasures of life, things that we have already pushed to the side because our very survival is at stake, let us keep a fast from sadness and disappointment and despair.

After all, if life is so fleeting, so fragile, so fraught with struggle, then why does God bother to so carefully imagine every tiny detail of every one of us and every element of creation. It doesn't make sense—unless there is something inherently precious about each cell of our being and each breath that we take. Let us consider this Lent, that it is not because the creatures of God's making must last forever that they must be so carefully and lovingly crafted. But rather, it is because they don't last very long that they must be so beautiful.

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,” Matthew places on the lips of Jesus in our Ash Wednesday Gospel. But this year, maybe it is more important to spend time contemplating that the opposite is also true: Where your heart is, there your treasure will be.”

Welcome to the next six weeks of your life. Welcome to Lent 2021, the most unusual season of Lent you will ever know.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

PM: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who brings us out of captivity into freedom, out of the wilderness into the promised land, out of death into life.

**C: Amen**

PM: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. (*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*)

PM: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,

**C: have mercy on us.**

PM: For self-centered living, and for failing to walk with humility and gentleness:

**C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

PM: For longing to have what is not ours, and for hearts that are not at rest with ourselves:

**C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

PM: For misuse of human relationships, and for unwillingness to see the image of God in others:

**C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

PM: For jealousies that divide families and nations, and for rivalries that create strife and warfare:

**C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

PM: For reluctance in sharing the gifts of God, and for carelessness with the fruits of creation:

**C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

PM: For hurtful words that condemn, and for angry deeds that harm:

**C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

PM: For idleness in witnessing to Jesus Christ, and for squandering the gifts of love and grace:

**C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

PM: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. Through the Holy Spirit God cleanses us and gives us the power to proclaim the mighty acts of the one who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen**

## **IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

O God, you call your church to be ministers of reconciliation throughout the world. Inspire your church in its proclamation of the gospel and guide its ministries to build up the body of Christ. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you created the earth and all its inhabitants and you declared that it is good. Protect mountains and valleys, animals and plants, and direct us to be good stewards of all you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you desire peace. Direct governments and leaders to work for the well-being of all people and raise up advocates to speak and serve on behalf of the downtrodden. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are our hope in the midst of despair, our help in the midst of sorrow, and our consolation in the midst of affliction. Grant comfort to all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, especially Leslie, Evy and her family, the Smith & Taylor families, James, Joan and Stephanie, Betty, Brandi, Katia & Rahul, Willie & Mary, Donna, Bruni, the Kowal and the Zazueta families, Roger, Carol, Weatherly Inn residents and staff, Les, Mayah, Judy, Jerry,

Ron, JD, communities across the country, Dave, Guests of the Community Meals Program, Sonja, Nicole, Josee and Jeannie, and support caregivers who attend to all in need. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are love, and you call us to love one another. Accompany with your grace those journeying toward baptism and call us all to repentance as we prepare to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to surge in our community and around the world, comfort the families of those who have died, heal the bodies of those who are suffering, sustain those who provide care, encourage those whose livelihood has been affected, and hasten the distribution of medical vaccines. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For what and for whom else do the people of God pray this morning?

*[Here other intercessions may be offered.]*

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are our life and our salvation. We give you thanks for the righteous who have died in faith. Inspire us by their example to proclaim your steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**HYMN**

*Abide With Me*

Cantor

Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847; Music: William H. Monk, 1823-1889

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour;  
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?  
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes,  
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;  
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

**INVITATION TO LENT**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

PM: Lord, remember us in your love as you teach us to pray:

**C: 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.**

## BLESSING

PM: You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor.

God bless you † that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

**C: Amen.**

*Service ends in silence.*

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## Serving in Worship:

Worship Leader:	Pastor Jim Kruse
Assisting Minister:	Karen Hansen
Cantors:	Lori Downey, Scott Hafso
Flautist:	Jan Hazelton
Organist:	Jiyoung Lee
Videographer:	Leslie Waltzer
Video Editor:	Dave Carlson
Banner:	Elaine Stamm
Remember, You Are Dust Montage	Jim Kruse & Eia Waltzer

**Readings for Sunday:** Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

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## Our Savior Lutheran Church Staff

Rev. James R. Kruse, <i>Transition Pastor (on leave)</i>	Scott Hafso, <i>Director of Worship &amp; Music</i>
Shari Lundberg, <i>Parish Administrator</i>	Kate Gagnon, <i>Lay Visitation Minister</i>
Dr. Jiyoung Lee, <i>Parish Organist</i>	