

Ash Wednesday

February 18th, 2026

7:00 p.m. In-person and Livestream Worship



Atonement Lutheran Church

Invite • Prepare • Go into the World

1900 Westfall Road, Rochester, NY 14618

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent with ash on our foreheads. This cross echoes our baptismal anointing, when we were buried with Christ. The ash is a chilling reminder of our mortality, but because our death is now in Christ, our endings are beginnings. The Lenten disciplines of acts of kindness, prayer, and fasting are marks of discipleship that can lead us to renewal as we bury all that is holding us back from being truly alive.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Have Mercy, Lord, My Sin Forgive

-J. S. Bach

***PSALM 51:1-17**

*Read responsively. Congregation reads **bold** type.*

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 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.**

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 purer 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.

** Please Stand As You Are Able*

- ¹⁰**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**
- ¹¹Cast 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.**
- ¹³Let 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.**
- ¹⁵O 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.**
- ¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

***GREETING**

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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.**

WORD

FIRST READING

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

A reading from Joel

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?'"

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

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

A reading from 2 Corinthians

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

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

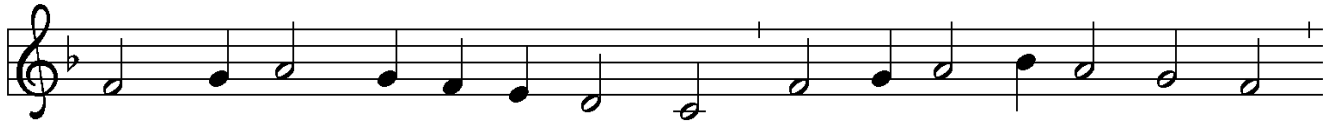
"At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

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

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATIONPraise and Thanks and Adoration*

783



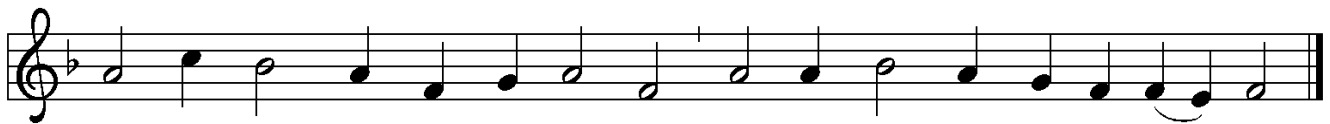
1 Praise and thanks and ad - o - ra - tion, Son of God, to you we give,
2 Hold me ev - er in your keep - ing, com - fort me in pain and strife;



for you chose to serve cre - a - tion, died that sin - ers all might live.
through my laugh - ter and my weep - ing, lift me to a no - bler life.



Dear Lord Je - sus, guide my way; faith - ful let me day by day
Draw my fer - vent love to you; con - stant hope and faith re - new



fol - low where your steps are lead - ing, find ad - ven - ture, joys ex - ceed - ing!
in your birth, your life and pas - sion, in your death and res - ur - rec - tion.

HOLY GOSPELMatthew 6:1-6, 16-21*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[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.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Silence for Reflection

***HYMN OF THE DAY** *Once We Sang and Danced*

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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

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

A time for silence is kept.

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

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.**

Those who wish to receive ashes may come forward. The pastor marks the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

PRAYER

We bow our heads before you, O God, aware of our sinfulness and our shortcomings. Remembering our baptism, the watermark of the cross upon us, we also receive this ashen cross upon our foreheads; a sign that in life and in death, we belong to you. By the cross and passion of Jesus Christ, bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Gathered by the Holy Spirit and renewed in the Word, let us pray to our merciful God for the needs of the world.

For your church marked with the cross of Christ, that it may find its richest treasure in being given away for the life of the world.

Merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

For all preparing for baptism in this Lenten season, that your steadfast love would strengthen them and all the baptized for fasting, prayer, and works of love.

Merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

For your creation fashioned from the dust of the ground, that your Spirit would restore threatened environments and renew our care for all creation.

Merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

For all nations and communities beset by conflict and violence, especially for the people of Ukraine, and for the people of Israel and Gaza, that weapons of war will be laid down and that wisdom, compassion, and acts of mercy may lead to peace and justice.

Merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

For an end to false righteousness, evil speech, and shallow piety in our lives, in the church, and in our national life.

Merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

For the hungry, homeless, unemployed, imprisoned, and all suffering from any affliction, that they might find comfort in your unchanging love. We pray especially for.....

Merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for all the saints, who know the treasure of eternal life. May all who are marked with the cross of Christ trust in the promise of the resurrection.

Merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers and all that we fail to ask, O God, for the sake of Jesus Christ who restores us to life. **Amen.**

OFFERTORY MUSIC *Mankind, Bemoan Your Grievous Sin* -J. S. Bach

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Our treasures, O Lord, come from your hand. Inspire us to give generously, but quietly; pray constantly, focused only on you; and to fast with gratitude for all you have given us; through Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

MEAL

***GREAT THANKSGIVING**

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.

***EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

***LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach 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.

DISTRIBUTION

All are invited to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Christ's body and blood truly present in the bread and the wine.

~Come forward by the center aisle.

~Children are invited to come forward for a blessing.

~White grape juice and gluten-free wafers are also available.

~Dispose of the cup in the basket provided.

~Please tell an usher if you need communion elements brought to your pew.

SENDING

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

Merciful God, accompany us on our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life 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.**

***BENEDICTION**

May God give you the grace and strength to take up the cross and follow Christ throughout this Lenten season. In the name of the Father, the † Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

***SENDING HYMN**

Chief of Sinners Though I Be

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***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, led by the cross of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Chorale Modale

-Charles Callahan

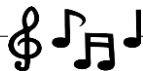
*The congregation is invited to remain for the postlude;
and following it, to respond with "Amen!"*

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Assisting Minister Rob White
Usher Karen Goodyear
Livestream Recorder Dave Irish
Altar Care Judy Lazenby

GUEST MUSICIAN

*We offer special thanks to our guest organist Keith Reas
for sharing his gift of music with us this evening.*



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Once We Sang and Danced



- 1 Once we sang and danced with glad-ness, once de-light filled ev-'ry breath;
- 2 All the wil-lows bow in weep-ing, all the riv-ers rage and moan,
- 3 God, who came to dwell a-mong us, God, who suf-fered our dis-grace,
- 4 Come, O Christ, a-mong the ash-es, come to wipe our tears a-way,



now we sit a-mong the ash-es, all our dreams de-destroyed by death.
as cre-a-tion joins our plead-ing: "God, do not leave us a-lone."
from your own heart, grieved and wound-ed, come the rich-es of your grace.
death de-stroy and sor-row ban-ish; now and al-ways, come and stay.

Chief of Sinners though I Be



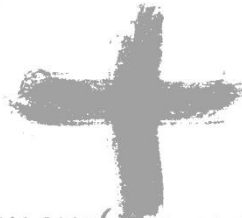
- 1 Chief of sin-ners though I be, Je-sus shed his blood for me,
- 2 Oh, the height of Je-sus' love! High-er than the heav'ns a-bove,
- 3 On-ly Je-sus can im-part balm to heal the wound-ed heart,
- 4 Chief of sin-ners though I be, Christ is all in all to me;
- 5 O my Sav-ior, help af-ford by your Spir-it and your word!



died that I might live on high, lives that I might nev-er die.
deep-er than the depths of sea, last-ing as e-ter-ni-ty.
peace that flows from sin for-giv'n, joy that lifts the soul to heav'n,
all my wants to him are known, all my sor-rows are his own.
When my way-ward heart would stray, keep me in the nar-row way;



As the branch is to the vine, I am his, and he is mine.
Love that found me—won-drous thought—found me when I sought him not.
faith and hope to walk with God in the way that E-noch trod.
He sus-tains the hid-den life safe with him from earth-ly strife.
grace in time of need sup-ply while I live and when I die.



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

Atonement Lutheran Church

The Rev. Gail Swanson, Pastor

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Office: (585) 442-1018

Cell: (614) 477-7863

David McCarthy, Director of Music Ministry

Becky R. Wiesmore, Administrative Assistant

Welcome to worship,

and a special welcome to those who are visiting with us today.

If you are interested in becoming a member of our congregation

or learning more about our ministries,

please speak to our Pastor.

MISSION STATEMENT

Atonement Lutheran Church is a gathering of God's people in Christ called to:

Invite all people into the presence of the living God,

Prepare for ministry in daily life and

Go into the world as disciples

Our Church Nursery is available
for parents to use with their children.

AN EASY WAY TO GIVE ~ SCAN HERE →

Scan the QR code with your smartphone's camera, then tap on the link that pops up, and you will be taken directly to Atonement's giving website.

If your phone doesn't automatically scan the code, you may need to download a QR code reader app. Many are available for free in the Google Play or Apple App store. *Please contact Lindee Krapf if you have any questions.*



Thank you for joining us in worship today!

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

Psalm 51:10



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