



Ash Wednesday  
*February 22, 2023*

Ascension Lutheran Church  
1105 N. Washington Blvd.  
Ogden, UT 84404

**Offerings may be placed in the offering tray at the back of the nave by the baptismal font.**

## Introduction

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.

## Welcome

*P* Welcome to our Ash Wednesday service...  
...We begin this journey with our “hearts open, minds awake...”

♪ ♪ Hearts open, minds awake, ♪ ♪  
change us now for heaven’s sake.  
Leave us not alone in hatred’s wake.  
Show us how to love.  
Show us how to love.  
Show us how, show us how to love.

*P* Ash Wednesday is our invitation to begin our journey of self-reflection It is the journey of repentance - “turning around” so that we might be in right relationship with God. In a sense, we are looking for love once again. When we look to God for love — not simply for the approval of others — and start with our own “turning,” we participate in the “turning around” of the world.

♪ ♪ Eyes open, shocked awake, ♪ ♪  
much to learn from our mistakes.  
Draw us closer in our heartache.  
Show us how to love.  
Show us how to love.  
Show us how, show us how to love.

## Confession and Assurance

*P* Let us join together in opening our hearts to the love of God. Before we even utter a word, we can be assured God will offer us grace and a way forward. For this reason, we can be honest with what pains us most about our own thoughts and actions. Let us pray:

*All* **Holy and Merciful One,  
we come bringing our deepest longings,  
and our failed attempts at satisfying them.  
We have often looked for love in things that cannot give us love.  
We yearn for lives that matter,  
we desire relationships that thrive,  
we want less regret.  
We fail to see that you have already given us what really matters:  
your love and acceptance.**

*P* You provide opportunities all around us  
to make a difference in the lives of others.  
You give us a fresh start each day,  
inviting us to trust you.

In this silence, we confess we have looked for love in all the wrong places. Today may we open ourselves to a change in our paths to seeing with new eyes, to setting aside empty promises.

*Silence for reflection*

My friends, be assured by the Psalmist who says,  
“God has mercy according to God’s steadfast love.”  
Let us respond together:

*All* **We open our hearts, our minds, our souls, our vision  
to the ways of love  
created by God,  
embodied in Jesus,  
and already moving in us by the Spirit.  
We are forgiven, loved, and freed! Amen!**

## Sharing the Peace

*In our continued physical distancing out of love for the health of one another, we will share the peace of our risen Lord by “speaking” that peace through sign language.*

**P** Christ become Love and Peace with you.

**All** And also with you.

## We Proclaim

### A reading from Joel, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter

*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.*

<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><sub>a</sub> 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?' "

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

*L* The word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God!**

Change My Heart, O God

Change my heart, O God; make it ev-er true.

Change my heart, O God; may I be like you. *last time fine*

You are the pot - ter; I am the clay.

Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.

## Gospel Reading

*P* The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 6th chapter.

**All Glory to you, O Lord.**

*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:] <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.”

*Mt 6:1-6, 16-21*

*P* The Word of God that is still speaking,

***All Praise to you, O Christ.***

## Prayers and Ashes

*P* The word mercy in English is the translation of the Greek word eleos...  
...Tonight, we will introduce a sung Kyrie Eleison. Listen to this prayer, and then join in as you are ready. We will repeat this refrain during the Prayers of the People throughout Lent.

♪ ♪ **Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison** ♪ ♪  
**Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison**

## Treasures & Distractions in Our Lives

*P* As we prepare to receive ashes, I invite you to take a moment to reflect on the true treasures in your life.

What are the things that would be devastating to live without?

Who are the people that grace your lives – the miracles of presence?

What are the things in your life path that you would regret never doing?  
I invite you to write whatever comes to your mind and heart in this moment.



## Love Treasures of My Life

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## Distractions from Loving My

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*P* Now, take a moment to list the things in your life that distract – that steal time and energy from your treasures – from your joy – from love.

♪ ♪ **Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison** ♪ ♪  
**Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison**

*P* Holy and Forgiving God,  
we beseech you, cry out to you,  
to intervene in us this season.

Help us create more attention to the places true love is found —  
in the treasures that are so abundant around us, given by you.

We prepare our lives to be marked with the reminder  
that we were made from dust, and to dust we shall return.

In this cross of ash upon our foreheads,  
may we commit to the heart-opening journey ahead of us  
as we consider that which gives life and all that contributes to death.

We know you are with us.

♪ ♪ **Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison** ♪ ♪  
**Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison**

*P* This is...  
the dust of dreams deferred  
the ashes of burned bridges  
  
the dust of worn out, dead end paths  
the ashes of destroyed relationships  
  
the dust of years of accumulated unfinished business  
the ashes of neglected passions  
  
we are marked by both love and sorrow  
dreams and disappointment  
fear of death yet undying hope  
  
we are wholly yours  
we are yours, holy one

**All** **Amen.**

♪ ♪ Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison ♪ ♪  
Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

*After all who desire ashes have received them...*

*P* 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.

**All Amen.**

We Go Forth

**Benediction**

*Please stand as you are able.*

*P* Go forth into the world, looking for love in all the right places!

**All We will look for signs of Love,  
making the true treasures of our lives the center of our hearts!**

♪ ♪ Show us how to love. ♪ ♪  
Show us how to love.  
Show us how, show us how to love.

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