

“Landmark of the Gospel Since 1834”
St Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

Our Purpose: Led by the Word of God,

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church is a family who lives and shares the gospel of Jesus Christ through love and service to all.

February 18, 2026

7:00 PM

Ash Wednesday

GREETING

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

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

SILENCE FOR MEDITATION

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.

HYMN

Restore in Us O God

R #133

1 Restore in us, O God,
 the splendor of your love;
 renew your image in our hearts,
 and all our sins remove.

2 O Spirit, wake in us
 the wonder of your pow'r;
 from fruitless fear unfurl our lives
 like springtime bud and flow'r.

3 Bring us, O Christ, to share
 the fullness of your joy;
 baptize us in the risen life
 that death cannot destroy.

4 Three personed God, fulfill
 the promise of your grace,
 that we, when all our searching ends,
 may see you face to face.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

¹ 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—
² 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.

¹² Yet even now, says the LORD,
 return to me with all your heart,
 with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.
 Return to the LORD your God,
 for he is gracious and merciful,
 slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
 and relenting from punishment.

¹⁴ 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?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 consecrate a fast;
 call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶ gather the people.

Consecrate the congregation;

assemble the aged;

gather the children,

even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room
 and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ 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?’ ”

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

^{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.

GOSPEL VERSE

Return to the **LORD**, your God, who is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. (*Joel 2:13*)

GOSPEL: Matthew 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 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.

PROCLAMATION

HYMN

O Sun of Justice

Sung to Tallis' Canon LBW 278

WOV 659

1 O Sun of Justice, Jesus Christ,
Dispel the darkness of our hearts,
Till your blest light makes nighttime flee
And brings the joys your day imparts.
2 In this our “time acceptable”
Touch every heart with sorrow, Lord.

**That, turned from sin, renewed by grace,
We may press on towards love's reward.**

**3 The day, your day, in beauty dawns
when in your light earth blooms anew;
led back again to life's true way,
may we, forgiv'n, rejoice in you.**

INVITATION TO LENT

CONFSSION 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

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.

Sung during the Imposition of Ashes

Psalm 51 Paraphrase

Tune: GETHSEMANE

Source: Happy Hymnody

1. God, be merciful to me
 On Thy grace I rest my plea;
 Plenteous in compassion Thou,
 Blot out my transgressions now;
 Wash me, make me pure within,
 Cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.

2. My transgressions I confess,
 Grief and guilt my soul oppress;
 I have sinned against Thy grace
 And provoked Thee to Thy face;
 I confess Thy judgment just,
 Speechless, I Thy mercy trust.

3. I've been sinful all my life;
 Thou desirest truth within.
 Thou alone my Savior art,
 Teach Thy wisdom to my heart;
 Make me pure, Thy grace bestow,
 Wash me whiter than the snow.

4. Broken, humbled to the dust,
 By Thy wrath and judgment just,
 Let my contrite heart rejoice
 And in gladness hear Thy voice;
 From my sins O hide Thy face,
 Blot them out in boundless grace.

5. Gracious God, my heart renew,
 Make my spirit right and true;
 Cast me not away from Thee,
 Let Thy Spirit dwell in me;
 Thy salvation's joy impart,
 Steadfast make my willing heart.

6. Sinners then shall learn from me
 And return, O God, to Thee;
 Savior, all my guilt remove,
 And my tongue shall sing Thy love;
 Touch my silent lips, O Lord,
 And my mouth shall praise accord.

7. Not the formal sacrifice
 Hath acceptance in Thine eyes;
 Broken hearts are in Thy sight
 More than sacrificial rite;

Contrite spirit, pleading cries,
Thou, O God, wilt not despise.

8. Prosper Zion in Thy grace
And her broken walls replace;
Then our righteous sacrifice
Shall delight Thy holy eyes;
Free-will off'rings, gladly, made,
On Thine altar shall be laid.

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.**

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.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Each petition ends: Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father,  Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

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 all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Thanks be to God.**

Let us go now in Christ's peace Thanks be to God.