

*Ash Wednesday*  
*February 18, 2026*



Lord of Love Lutheran Church  
10405 Fort St., Omaha, NE 68134

*"Celebrating and sharing God's Love in a welcoming community of faith, while serving others."*

*Worship 7:00 p.m.*

***Bold type indicates Congregational responses***

*\* Indicates where congregation is invited to stand*

### ***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.

# WE GATHER

## Prelude

## Announcements

### Lenten Theme Introduction

P: Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lent season, a time when we aspire to make some room for deeper introspection and practices that will draw us into the love and assurance of faith. But sometimes faith can feel not as assured as we hoped for. We can feel “less than,” perceiving that others seem to be able to be “more faithful” in their practices and beliefs. This Lent, rather than change for “the best,” we’ll seek to gain momentum one day at a time, “to reach for a faith that is never perfect, but good enough.”

**Theme Song:** “*Good Enough*” by Marcia McFee, Marsha Moors-Charles, Chuck Bell

What in our lives do we dream a-bout for to - mor-row, void of sor-row?

5  
Timespent re - gret-ting de - ci - sions of our yes-ter-days, mi - stakes we made?

9  
Some-times we get what we get, life dis - ap-oints us and yet,

13  
God is still here and some - how, this faith is good e - nough.

### \*Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray together,  
**Holy One, Merciful God,**  
make yourself known to us. Be present with us in this often troubled journey of life. Create in us hearts that are open to transformation. Give us the patience of practice in this Lent season—ordering our days with time enough for you.  
**Amen.**

## **\*Honest Questions, Compassionate Response**

P: Jesus used the word “hypocrite” to describe those who put on airs in public to make people believe that they were holy, that their religious practice was... well... perfect. But their hearts were actually not in the practice, rather in the rewards that public approval could bring them—which is here today, often gone tomorrow. Sometimes it is life itself that robs us of the shiny, perfect life that we had planned for ourselves. A diagnosis. A broken heart. A lost opportunity. What places in your life and faith could you begin to loose from the chains of perfectionism? Let us take a moment of silent reflection...

### *Silent Reflection*

Hear this compassionate word from the prophet Isaiah:

**“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?... Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly.”**

Know that already, God is offering us freedom from the bonds of perfectionism, inviting us to break the yoke of what “should be” so that we might discover what “might be” when we honor the small steps that are *actually* possible, in this moment, for this one day.

And know, that despite our sometimes faltering steps, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are being forgiven, even now.

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Glory to God! Amen.**

1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,  
 4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,

naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:  
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!

thou my best thought by day and by night,  
 Thou my soul's shel - ter, thou my high tow'r,  
 thou, and thou on - ly, first in my heart,  
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
 raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.  
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Please be seated.

## WE PROCLAIM

### **Scripture Reading:** 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

L: We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 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! We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 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.**

### **\*Gospel Acclamation:** “Change My Heart, O God” .....ELW 801



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



Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.



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



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

**\*Holy Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] “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.

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

“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. 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.

“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. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 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.

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

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Please be seated.*

**Thoughts about an Imperfect Life and Faith** ..... Pastor Becky Sells  
“Perfectionism is impossible. Transformation isn’t.”

**Song: "That's Enough for Me" by Barney E Warren, Marcia McFee and Chuck Bell v.1**

1. Though all a-long our dail-y pil-grim race our treas-ures small and ve-ry few may be,  
 2. When food and rai-ment are not ev-er sure, and sim-ple fare is hard to get for some,

our souls are blest with God's un - end - ing grace, and that is e-nough, e-nough for me.  
 we work to share our goods with one and all, and that is e-nough, e-nough for me.

Oh that's \_\_\_\_\_ e - nough for me, \_\_\_\_\_ God's  
 Oh, that's \_\_\_\_\_ e - nough for me, \_\_\_\_\_ God's

truth \_\_\_\_\_ has set me free; \_\_\_\_\_ The love \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ has  
 truth \_\_\_\_\_ has set me free; \_\_\_\_\_ A love \_\_\_\_\_ like Christ's is

sanc - ti - fied my soul, And \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_ is e - nough for \_\_\_\_\_ me.  
 meant for ev - 'ry soul, And \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_ is e - nough for \_\_\_\_\_ me.

**Ritual of Ashes and Turning Steps We Climb into Gardens**

# Imposition of Ashes Hymn: "Sing Out! We're Made of Common Dust"

\*Sung to the tune: "Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak," written by Robert Schumann, 1889, and words by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

1. Sing out! We're made of com - mon dust; One  
2. This gift of ash - es we re - ceive Re  
3. The dust and dirt of child - ren's play, of  
4. We sing, O God, of what you give: this

3

day, to dust we shall re - turn! Yet God, you've placed your  
minds us we be - long to you. You call us to re  
youth - ful times, of work - ing years. Are part of life and  
ash re - minds us we are yours. In life we're claim'd, in

6

mark on - us And so for you our spi - rits yearn.  
pent, be - lieve, and seek your Way in all we do.  
life's de - cay; We wash the dust with sor - row's tears.  
death we live! In Christ our life, your love en - dures.

\*P: 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, assure us of your unending grace, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us in eternal life.

**Amen.**

***\*Prayers of Intercession***

L: 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. We especially pray for those on our prayer list and those we name in our hearts either silently or aloud now... 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.**

**\*The Peace**

P: The peace of Christ be with you!

**C: And also with you!**

*Please share the peace of Christ with one another.*

*Please be seated.*

***Offering***

All our special Lenten offerings will be split 50/50 to support Dana Village (local) and ELCA Good Gifts (global). You can give electronically at [www.lord-of-love.org](http://www.lord-of-love.org), or place your offering in the plate at the back of the sanctuary

***Offertory Choir Anthem: "How Can It Be?"*** .....arr. Lloyd Larson

***\*Offertory Prayer***

P: 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 Great Thanksgiving***

P: The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

***\*Words of Institution***

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

### ***\*The Lord's Prayer***

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

*Please be seated.*

### ***Communion Invitation***

P: Come as you are to feast at the Lord's Table of God's goodness and mercy.

### ***Lamb of God***

The musical score for 'Lamb of God' is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are: 'Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us, have mer - cy. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us, have mer - cy. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; grant us peace.'

### ***Communion***

#### ***\*Post-Communion Prayer***

P: 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.**

## **A Blessing For You to Take with You.**

Each midweek worship will end with a blessing from Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie's material.

### ***"A Blessing Before a Fast."***

*P: "Blessed are you, ready to open yourself to a new joy, a doorway that until now has been hidden. In this culture of acquisition and gain, blessed are you desiring fresh ears to hear what might be a bit too loud. Who take the next step to turn it down a notch and make more space for God. Who discipline yourself, with time, intention, and hope, anticipating God to show up in your discomfort. Trusting that when we need God, God promises to be there."*

*God, give me courage, give me strength, give me hunger for you. Let this set time of less be a chance for more of you. Let this fast be an entrance into the discernment I desire, the divine presence I'm longing for, and the hope to will what You will, oh God, to be who You've called me to be."*

### ***\*Benediction***

P: And now, may the God who loves all of creation, especially the imperfect bits, and Jesus, our companion along this crooked path called life, and the Holy Spirit, who loves to improvise in surprising ways, go with you, dwell among you, and give you joy.

**Amen.**

### ***\*Blessing for the Journey/Dismissal***

P: God is still here and somehow,

**This faith is good enough.**

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

**Thanks be to God**

### ***Postlude***

#### **Change My Heart, O God**

Text: Eddie Espinosa, b. 1953

Music: CHANGE MY HEART, Eddie Espinosa

Text and music © 1982 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing, admin. Music Services

#### **Sing Out! We're Made of Common Dust**

Tune: Robert Schumann, 1839 ("Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak") (MIDI)

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#### **Now the Feast and Celebration Liturgy**

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