

# Messiah Lutheran Church

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Pastor  
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## COMMUNITY ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 18, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

(Congregational parts are in **bold letters**)

(\*Please stand (if you are able))

### INTRODUCTION

*Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.*

### PREPARATION

CHIMES: CALL TO WORSHIP

PRELUDE

[A Time for Meditation and Prayer]

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### \* THE CONFESSION OF SINS

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

*Silence is kept for reflection*

*P Most holy and merciful God,*

**C 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.**

*P 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.*

**C Have mercy on us, O God.**

*P 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.*

**C Have mercy on us, O God.**

*P Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have*

*infected our lives, we confess to you.*

**C Have mercy on us, O God.**

*P Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.*

**C Have mercy on us, O God.**

*P Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.*

**C Have mercy on us, O God.**

*P Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.*

**C Have mercy on us, O God.**

*P Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.*

**C Have mercy on us, O God.**

*P Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.*

**C Have mercy on us, O God.**

*P Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.*

**C Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

### **IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

*P Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return. (Those who desire to receive the ashes as a reminder of their guilt, contrition, and mortality may come forward by the center aisle and return to your seats by the side aisles). Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,*

**C that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

*P By the cross and Passion of your Son, our Savior,*

**C bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

*P 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.*

**C Amen**

### **THE SERVICE**

\* OPENING HYMN "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling"

\* GREETING

*P The Lord be with you.*

**C And also with you.**

\* KYRIE (spoken)

*P Lord, have mercy upon us.*

**C Lord, have mercy upon us.**

*P Christ, have mercy upon us.*

**C Christ, have mercy upon us.**

*P Lord, have mercy upon us.*

**C Lord, have mercy upon us.**

\* SALUTATION AND RESPONSE (spoken)

*P The Lord be with you.*

**C And also with you.**

\* PRAYER OF THE DAY (spoken in unison)

*P Let us pray....*

**C 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**

OLD TESTAMENT 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?'"

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-17 (responsively)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup>**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.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways to offenders, and sinners shall be restored to you.

<sup>14</sup>**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

<sup>15</sup>O LORD, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

<sup>16</sup>**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

EPISTLE LESSON: 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

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.

\* THE 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

**C Glory to you, O Lord** (spoken)

[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."

**C Praise to you, O Christ** (spoken)

SERMON "Tree of Life: given and denied" Pastor Gay Irwin  
(Genesis 2:8-9, 15-18, 3:22-24)

\* HYMN "Lord Jesus, Think on Me"

\* APOSTLES' CREED (**all**)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

\* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*P Led by Christ in our journey of repentance and moved by his compassion, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.*

*A brief silence.*

*P Holy God, you gather your people in solemn assembly. Grant us grace to observe a holy Lent through fasting, prayer, and works of love. Lord, in your mercy,*

**C hear our prayer.**

*P You give generously to all your creatures. Provide for all animals whose winter rations are dwindling, and prepare the earth for renewal in coming weeks. Lord, in your mercy,*

**C hear our prayer.**

*P You move your people to cry out for justice. Reveal all the ways in which we oppress others. Turn us from our complacency, and move us to work on their behalf. Lord, in your mercy,*

**C hear our prayer.**

*P You lift up the poor. Care for all who know poverty of any kind: of daily needs, of spirit, of health. Pour your abundant mercy upon them. Lord, in your mercy,*

**C hear our prayer.**

*P You turn people from their sin to live for you alone. Renew us in the covenant of baptism, that we might live in hope of a creation reconciled and restored. Lord, in your mercy,*

**C hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

*P As we remember saints who have gone before us, guide us in our journey and*

open our lives to the cleansing and renewing power of your abundant forgiveness. Lord, in your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

*P into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.*

**C Amen.**

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

*[Please pass the Friendship Pad down your pew for all to sign and then back to the center aisle so everyone has the opportunity to read the names. We request that our guests also give us their home address. Thank you].*

\* OFFERTORY PRAYER

*P God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**C Amen**

### **SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

\* THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

*P The peace of the Lord be with you always.*

**C And also with you**

Congregational sharing: **“Peace be with you.”**

\* EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

*P Holy God, you alone are holy, you alone are God. The universe declares your praise: beyond the stars; beneath the sea; within each cell; with every breath.*

**C We praise you, O God.**

*P Generations bless your faithfulness: through the water; by night and day; across the wilderness; out of exile; into the future.*

**C We bless you, O God.**

*P We give you thanks for your dear Son: at the heart of human life; near to those who suffer; beside the sinner; among the poor; with us now.*

**C We thank you, O God.**

*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. Remembering his love for us on the way, at the table, and to the end, we proclaim the mystery of faith.*

**C Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

*P We pray for the gift of your Spirit: in our gathering; within this meal; among your people; throughout the world. Blessing, praise, and thanks to you, holy God, through Christ Jesus, by your Spirit, in your church, without end.*

**C Amen**

\* THE LORD'S PRAYER ['trespasses'] **(all)**

**C 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**

\* INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*P Come to Christ, broken and poured out for you.*

(In hospitality and attempting to meet the needs of individuals, Messiah now offers gluten free communion hosts. If you wish to receive gluten free hosts, please come to the side where Pastor Esborn is serving).

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*["INTINCTION" – dip your wafer in the wine. Come forward by the center aisle and return by the side aisle. All who wish to stand at the chancel rail after partaking for a time of silent meditation are invited to do so].*

\* POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

*P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.*

**C Amen**

\* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*P Merciful God, accompany 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.*

**C Amen**

\* BLESSING

*P The blessing of God Almighty, the wisdom and power of + Christ Jesus, and the light of the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always.*

**C Amen**

\* CLOSING HYMN

"O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days"

\* DISMISSAL

*P 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 faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**C Amen**

VISITORS ARE INVITED TO COMMUNE with us if they are baptized and if with us, in our faith, discern the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the bread and the wine. It is in that doctrine of the Real Presence that we offer the Holy Sacrament.

FRIENDSHIP PADS: We invite everyone (members and visitors) worshipping with us this evening to sign the Friendship Pads. If you are a visitor, please be sure to include your address when signing. The pads are found on the aisle seat of each pew in the nave, and in each section of the Adult Sunday School Room.

WE WELCOME OUR NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS AND CHRISTIAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS from the other churches of the community and appreciate the opportunity that is ours as fellow Christians to worship together. Messiah is glad to have you as our guests this evening and we pray that the service will be a rich blessing to you.

WE THANK all who are participating in the service this evening.

THE OFFERING PLATES are located in the rear. The offering will be given to the Mifflin/Mifflintown Area Ministerium for its continued ministry to our community.

RESTROOMS AND NURSERY ARE LOCATED through the door at the rear of the nave. No nursery attendant is provided, but parents are welcome to take their children there and listen to the service (the control knob for the PA system is beside the hallway door).

THE NEXT COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICE will be held on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Jude's Catholic Church. The theme will be "The low tree into the Tree of Life" – Ezekiel 17:22-24, Ps 1:4 with Pastor Bill Esborn as the guest preacher.

### **ASH WEDNESDAY**

*Ash Wednesday is one of the most sober days of our church year. It is sober because we set aside this day that starts the Lenten season to reflect on the quality of our lives. And when we do, we reach three conclusions: we are sinners, we are mortal, and we need our relationship with God renewed. And all three truths lead to the cross of Christ.*

*Ashes are symbolic of all three of these truths. Sinfulness: from Old Testament times, ashes have been used to show our guilt before God, as when someone donned sackcloth and ashes as an outward sign of contrition. Mortality: ashes are the remains of something once alive: we recognize this in our Christian burial service with the words "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Renewal: ashes also symbolize cleansing (soap was often made from ashes) and new life (fields are burned after the harvest to clear the ground and fertilize the soil for the new season's growth).*

*Therefore, since as early as the third century, Christians have used ashes as the symbol for this day which was set aside especially to recognize our great need for a savior, someone to save us from our guilt of sin and from our mortality and to renew us with the Father in heaven.*

*Those who wish will be able to follow this centuries-old Christian tradition of receiving ashes in the sign of the cross on their foreheads during our service this evening.*