

“Growing God’s Kingdom”



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

Ash Wednesday

February 22nd, 2023

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

REV. SAMUEL J. LEISTER, PASTOR

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TODAY’S 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.

Messiah Lutheran Church

3 South Third Street
Mifflintown, PA 17059
Church Office / 717-436-6213

Rev. Samuel Leister
Bob St. Clair
Slone Smith
Andrea Cameron
Briley Holderman
Julia Martin
Slone Smith
Christie Holderman
Linda Clark & Chris Martin

Pastor
Organist/Pianist
Organist/Pianist
Choir Director
Lector
Acolyte
Prayers of Intercession
Bread Maker
Altar Guild

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 22, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

*Please stand as YOU are able

PREPARATION

CHIMES

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

[Please use the prelude as a quiet time to prepare yourself for worship].

* CONFESSION OF SIN

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

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

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 “In the Cross of Christ I Glory” pg. 9 in bulletin

* 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.**

WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON.....Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

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?'"

L: Here ends the reading.

C: **Thanks be to 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.

²Wash 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.

⁴Against 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.

⁶Indeed, 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.

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.

¹⁷**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

^{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.

L: Here ends the reading.

C: Thanks be to God.

* THE VERSE (sung)

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

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

C Glory to you, O Lord (spoken)

[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."

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ (spoken)

SERMON: "Hidden Ashes, Hidden Dust"

Pastor Sam Leister

* HYMN OF THE DAY "Sweet Hour of Prayer"

pg. 10 in bulletin

* 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 (Prayers read by Worship Leader)

P Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

* OFFERING PRAYER

P God of good gifts, receive these and all our offerings as we present them in faithful service for the sake of your gospel. Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.

C Amen

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

* 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 and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

* 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 Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love.

C Amen.

* BLESSING

P God, the giver of love, + Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey.

C Amen.

* SENDING HYMN “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” pg. 11 in bulletin

* DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Serve in love.

C Thanks be to God.

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WELCOME TO ALL!

WITH CHRIST’S LOVE AND GOD’S GRACE, we welcome all who worship at Messiah this evening. If you are a VISITOR or GUEST, we invite you to record your visit in the guest book provided in the Narthex. If you are seeking a church home, please speak to the Pastor. Our fellowship in Jesus Christ is open and extended to all persons who confess His Lordship over all life. Young children are also encouraged to join us in our worship experience! We are so thankful that you joined us for worship today!

FOR YOUR COMFORT, restrooms are located in the hallway through the double doors of the Adult Sunday School Room and to the left.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD we thank all of you for attending the Ash Wednesday service, in person and online! We also thank those who have shared their talents in the choir: Joe Barnes, Jr., Kevin Cunningham, Shelly Damiano, Dot Dowling, Larry Goss, Christina Martin, Julia Martin, Cynthia Smith, Slone Smith, Dianna Spriggle, David Stimeling, Marci Walters, Diana Wise, Larry Wise, and Madison Wolfe.

THE OFFERING PLATES are located in the Adult Sunday School Room.

2023 PORT ROYAL MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFASTS, 7:00 a.m. at the Port Royal Community Building on 4th street:

March 4	Rev. Garrick Paden, Youth Pastor	Cedar Grove Brethren in Christ Church
March 11	Don Musser	Faith Community Church
March 18	Warren Wagner	Free Spring Church of the Brethren
March 25	Rodney Pry	Free Spring Church of the Brethren
April 1	Rev. Parrish Munro	McAlisterville/Pine Grove Methodist Church
April 8	Rev. Ron Shupe	First Baptist Church

2023 LENTEN SERVICES will be held each Wednesday during Lent beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the following locations:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Preaching</u>
March 1	St. Stephen's Lutheran Church	"Bread of Life" John 6:35	Pastor Mindy Petrovcic
March 8	Westminster Presbyterian Church	"The Resurrection & the Life" John 11:25	Pastor Rich Adams
March 15	Aldersgate Methodist Church	"The Way, the Truth & the Life" John 8:32	Pastor Sam Leister
March 22	Messiah Lutheran Church	"The Vine" John 15:1-5	Pastor Mindy Petrovcic
March 29	Aldersgate Methodist Church	"The Light of the World" Matthew 5:14-16	Pastor Nancy McClure
April 5	St. Stephen's Lutheran Church	"The Good Shepherd" John 10:10-15	Pastor Sam Leister

ALL LOOSE OFFERING collected from Messiah and other area churches from the Ash Wednesday, mid-week Lenten services and the Tenebrae service will go to the Juniata County Food Pantry.

2023 LADIES COMMUNITY LENTEN TEAS – Social time begins at 9:30 a.m. with light refreshments followed by Bible Study at 10:00 a.m.:

March 1	St. Stephen's Lutheran Church	Kathy Whitesel (363-6144)
March 8	Westminster Presbyterian Church	Connie Benner (436-2304)
March 15	Trinity Methodist Church	Linda Groninger (994-3226)
March 22	Aldersgate Methodist Church	Pastor Mindy Petrovcic (513-7194)
March 29	St. Jude's Catholic Church	Kathy Fitzgerald (348-9098)

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.