



**ASH WEDNESDAY**

*February 18, 2026*

# ETERNAL LOVE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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*a member congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)*

## FOR OUR GUESTS

Thank you for being here. During your visit today, you will see and hear what we're all about: God's *eternal love* for us through his Son, Jesus Christ! Any directions for speaking or singing, standing or sitting, will be indicated in this folder or projected on the wall in front of you.

*Restrooms:* are available just outside the chapel doors down the hallway to the left.

*Nursery:* We encourage families to worship together. If an adult needs to step out of the chapel briefly with a child, the nursery is provided just outside the chapel near the restrooms.

*For Kids:* Activity sheets for young children are available on the bulletin table. Small bags with quiet activity items hang near the table.

## ABOUT OUR LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICES SERIES

Our series is titled: CrossWords. These Wednesdays of Lent we will be selecting one word associated with Jesus' saving work for us as he endured the cross for us. We will learn and refresh powerful truths rooted in the good news of our Savior. Tonight, we reflect on *justification*.

## ABOUT ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday gets its name from the ancient Christian ritual of imposing or wearing ashes, employing a symbol long associated with sorrow over sin. God spoke these words to Adam soon after the fall: "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). Jesus connected repentance with "sack cloth and ashes" (Matthew 11:21).

There will be no actual imposition of ashes in this evening's service, but with repentant reflection we take to heart Jesus' gift of *justification*. Jesus bless your worship.

*Words for reflection are provided for those taking communion today. They are found on pp. 295-296 in the hymnal.*

## OPENING HYMN

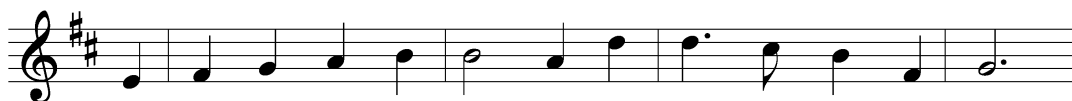
## 798 I Lay My Sins on Jesus sts. 1-2, 4



1 I lay my sins on Je - sus, the spot - less Lamb of God;  
2 I lay my wants on Je - sus, all full - ness dwells in him;  
4 I long to be like Je - sus, meek, lov - ing, low - ly, mild;



he bears them all and frees us from the ac - curs - ed load.  
he heals all my dis - eas - es, my soul he does re - deem.  
I long to be like Je - sus, the Fa - ther's ho - ly child.



I bring my guilt to Je - sus to wash my crim - son stains  
I lay my griefs on Je - sus, my bur - dens and my cares;  
I long to be with Je - sus a - mid the heav'n - ly throng,



white in his blood most pre - cious till not a spot re - mains.  
he from them all re - leas - es, he all my sor - rows shares.  
to sing with saints his prais - es, to learn the an - gels' song.

*STAND*

## INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## INTRODUCTION TO CONFESSION

Brothers and sisters in Christ, God created us to know joy in fellowship with him, to love all people, and to live in harmony with all creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. By our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn to him and live. Therefore, God in his mercy has sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take our place under the law, to suffer for us, and to die the death we deserve. God made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.

During the forty days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

Let us confess our sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit ourselves to this struggle.

## CONFESSION

Most holy and merciful Father,  
**we confess to you and to one another that we have sinned by our own fault,  
by our own 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, Lord.**

We have placed our wants before your will.  
We have gratified the desires of our sinful nature.  
We have merited your punishment now and forever.  
**Have mercy on us, Lord.**

For what we think or say or do that is at variance with your will,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.  
**Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great.**

## **ASH WEDNESDAY REMEMBRANCE**

Remember that you are dust + and to dust you shall return.

Accomplish in us, Lord, the work of your salvation  
**that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and suffering of your Son,  
**bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

## **ABSOLUTION**

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. He sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, you never despise what you have made and always forgive those who turn to you. Create in us such new and contrite hearts that we may truly repent of our sins and obtain your full and gracious pardon; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*BE SEATED*

## FIRST READING

**Isaiah 59:12–20**

*The LORD saw our sin problem. He himself stepped in to redeem us.*

<sup>12</sup>Yes, our rebellious deeds are many before you,  
and our sins testify against us.  
Our rebellious deeds are with us,  
and as for our guilty deeds, we are aware of them.

<sup>13</sup>Those deeds are rebellion and treachery against the LORD.  
We turn back from following our God.  
We incite oppression and apostasy.  
We conceive and mutter deceitful words from our hearts.

<sup>14</sup>Justice is turned back,  
and righteousness stands far away,  
for truth stumbles in the city square,  
and honesty cannot enter it.

<sup>15</sup>The truth is missing,  
and anyone who turns from evil makes himself prey.

The LORD looked and saw something evil—  
there was no justice.

<sup>16</sup>He saw that there was no one.

He was appalled that there was no one who could intervene.  
So his own arm worked salvation for him,  
and his own righteousness supported him.

<sup>17</sup>He clothed himself with righteousness like armor  
and wore a helmet of salvation on his head.

He dressed in garments for vengeance,  
and he wrapped himself with zeal like a cloak.

<sup>18</sup>He will repay in full what they have earned,  
namely, wrath to his foes and full payment to his enemies.  
He will repay even the distant coastlands.

<sup>19</sup>From the west they will fear the LORD's name,  
and from the rising of the sun they will fear his glory,  
for he will come like a raging river,  
driven by the Spirit of the LORD.

<sup>20</sup>Then a redeemer will come for Zion  
and for those in Jacob who turn from rebellion.  
This is the declaration of the LORD.

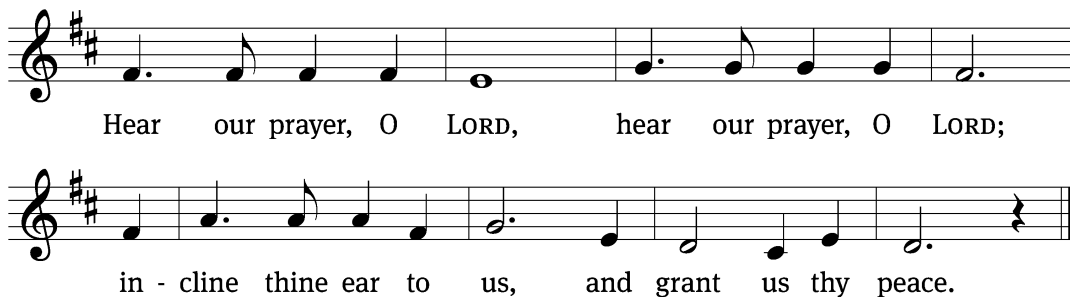
The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM OF THE DAY

## Psalm 143A Hear Our Prayer, O LORD

*The small group sings the psalm four times, then invites the congregation to sing once.*



## SECOND READING

## Galatians 2:16

*We are justified by faith and not by the works of the law.*

<sup>16</sup>We know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. So we also believed in Christ Jesus that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*STAND*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (spoken)

## Joel 2:13

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God.**

Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and abounding in love.

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God.**



*Storing up treasures in heaven helps us fight against hypocrisy and showiness.*

<sup>1</sup>Be careful that you do not do your righteous works in front of people, so that they will notice. If you do, you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup>So whenever you perform acts of mercy, do not sound a trumpet for yourself, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets to be praised by people. Amen I tell you: They have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>Instead, when you perform acts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. <sup>4</sup>Then your acts of mercy will be in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>Whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by people. Amen I tell you: They have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever you pray, go into your private room, close your door, and pray to your Father who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what others cannot see, will reward you.

<sup>16</sup>Whenever you fast, do not make yourself look sad like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces to show everyone that they are fasting. Amen I tell you: They have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that it is not apparent to people that you are fasting, but only to your Father who sees what is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

<sup>19</sup>Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup>But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>Because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

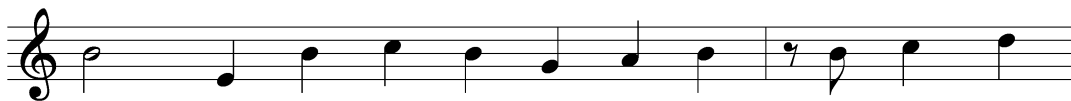
The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

*BE SEATED*

# HYMN OF THE DAY      650 From Depths of Woe, Lord God, I Cry sts. 1-2, 4-5

*The small group sings stanzas one and four. The congregation sings two and five.*



1 From depths of woe, Lord God, I cry; O hear my  
 2 What we have done on our best day is flawed from  
 4 If it de-lays in-to the night or waits un-  
 5 Al-though our sin is great in-deed, the grace of



hum-ble plead-ing! Lis-ten in mer-cy to my sigh,  
 its be-gin-ning; on-ly your grace can clear a-way  
 til to-mor-row, my heart will lean on God's great might,  
 God is great-er; no loss we suf-fer can ex-ceed



my prayer for res-cue heed-ing! Were you, O  
 the guilt of all our sin-ning. Be-fore you  
 dis-card-ing doubt and sor-row. The Spir-it  
 the help of our Cre-a-tor. Our shep-herd



Lord, to fix your gaze on our re-bel-lious,  
 pride must dis-ap-pear; each soul must live in  
 of the Lord is near, pro-vid-ing strength to  
 good and true is he, who will at last his



sin-ful ways, then who could stand be-fore you?  
 rev-'rent fear, up-on your grace re-ly-ing.  
 per-severe; de-pend on God to help you!  
 peo-ple free from all their sin and sor-row.

*Justification: A Verdict to Live By***PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

Lord God, gracious Father, we thank you for setting your Son's sacrifice between us and sin's reward. By your Spirit work in us through the gospel, give us repentant hearts, make our faith firm in Christ, and enliven us to serve you faithfully.

**Have mercy upon us, Lord, according to your unfailing love.**

Lord God, loving Father, in your mercy you abundantly supply our needs of body and soul. Create in us the mind of Christ, that in humility and generosity—considering not only our own interests, but also the interests of others—we may be merciful to those in need. Direct our efforts to help poor, lonely, troubled, and ill people.

**Have mercy upon us, Lord, according to your unfailing love.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, look with favor upon all sick, injured, and recovering people. [We pray especially for....] If it be your will deliver them from their infirmities. Let them hear of your unfailing love.

**Have mercy upon us, Lord, according to your unfailing love.**

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

*Silent prayer*

Lord God, eternal Father, we praise you that you have delivered the Christian souls who have gone before us from this world of dust and ashes to paradise. As their prayers continually ascend before your throne, join our prayers to theirs as fragrant incense. Hear us for the sake of him who was crucified for us and always intercedes on our behalf, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

## OFFERING

*The members of Eternal Love congregation have joined together to do the Lord's work in this city and around the world. Guests need not feel obligated to participate in this offering which supports our church's ministry. If being here today was a blessing to you and you would like to support our ministry, you can scan here and enter your phone number or email address to donate. (Members, please use a phone number or email address that is currently on file with the church).*



*During this time, we ask that everyone take part in completing the worship register. Please fill in the requested information and pass the booklet to the end of the row. Thank you!*

## THE SACRAMENT

*STAND*

## PREFACE

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 him thanks and praise.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

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

## O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD

*The minister sings stanza one. The congregation sings stanza two.*



1 O Lamb of God, once lift - ed high up - on a cross to  
2 O Lamb of God, your sac - ri - fice has can - celled sin, has



bleed and die, in per - fect love you took our place—  
paid its price; your per - fect love will nev - er cease—



be - stow on us your sav - ing grace.  
have mer - cy, Lord, and grant us peace. A - men.

*BE SEATED*

## DISTRIBUTION

*For our guests: Eternal Love Lutheran Church practices close communion. We welcome congregational members and those in fellowship with our national church body to receive the sacrament with us today. If you are interested in learning more about what we believe or about holy communion, please speak with our pastor.*



1 Je - sus Christ, our bless - ed Sav - ior, turned a - way God's  
 2 As his pledge of love un - dy - ing, he, this pre - cious  
 4 Use - less would be Je - sus' pas - sion if sal - va - tion  
 5 Christ says, "Come, all you that la - bor, and re - ceive my



wrath for - ev - er; by his bit - ter grief and woe  
 food sup - ply - ing, gives his bod - y with the bread  
 you could fash - ion. Do not come if you sup - pose  
 grace and fa - vor; those who feel no pain or ill



he saved us from the e - vil foe.  
 and with the wine the blood he shed.  
 you need not him who died and rose.  
 need no phy - si - cian's help or skill."

6 Then hold fast with faith unshaken  
 that this food is to be taken  
 by the souls who are distressed,  
 by hearts that long for peace and rest.

7 Praise the Father, who from heaven  
 unto us such food has given  
 and, to mend what we have done,  
 gave into death his only Son.

## *STAND*

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
**his mercy endures forever.**

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.  
**Amen.**

*The chapel lights are dimmed for the closing evening hymn.*





- 1 Now the day is o - ver, night is draw - ing nigh;
- 2 Je - sus, give the wea - ry calm and sweet re - pose;
- 3 Com - fort ev - 'ry suf - f'rer watch - ing late in pain;
- 4 Thro' the long night watch - es may your an - gels spread
- 5 When the morn - ing wak - ens, then may I a - rise



shad - ows of the eve - ning steal a - cross the sky.  
 with your ten - d'rest bless - ing may my eye - lids close.  
 those who plan some e - vil, from their sin re - strain.  
 their bright wings a - bove me, watch - ing round my bed.  
 pure and fresh and sin - less in your ho - ly eyes.





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Minister: Pastor Dave Backus

Usher: Neil Jeske

Communion Assistants: Adam Grissom, Dave Huebner

Accompanist: Adrienne Bengel (Riverview)

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### **798 I Lay My Sins on Jesus sts. 1–2, 4**

Text: Horatius Bonar, 1808–1889, alt. Tune: Samuel S. Wesley, 1810–1876. Text and tune: Public domain

### **Psalm 143A Hear Our Prayer, O LORD**

Tune: George Whelpton. Tune: Public domain

### **650 From Depths of Woe, Lord God, I Cry sts. 1–2, 4–5**

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Michael D. Schultz, b. 1963. Tune: Martin Luther, 1483–1546, alt. Text: © 2021

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### **O Christ, Lamb of God - 1077 Agnus (Eve) - JAM LUCIS**

Text: Michael D. Schultz. Tune: Benedictine plainsong. Text: © 2021 Northwestern Publishing House. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 703840. Tune: Public domain

### **659 Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior sts. 1–2, 4–7**

Text: John Hus, c. 1369–1415; German version, Martin Luther, 1483–1546, abr.; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941. Tune:

Geistliche Lieder aufs new gebessert, Wittenberg, 1533, ed. Joseph Klug, alt. Text and tune: Public domain

### **786 Now the Day Is Over**

Text: Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924, abr., alt. Tune: Joseph Barnby, 1838–1896. Text and tune: Public domain

### **Holy Bible**

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Based on Setting Ten (Evening) from Christian Worship.

Photography and video recording may occur during your visit here today. If you do not wish to participate, please notify us at [office.manager@eternal-love.org](mailto:office.manager@eternal-love.org).

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