

# Ash Wednesday Service



# **FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**246 South Main Street  
Greensburg, Pennsylvania  
724-834-1457  
felchurch.org**

Chris Combs  
Marvin J. Huls

Pastor  
Director of Music

## **WELCOME TO FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH!**

We are happy that you decided to worship with us. If you are visiting just for today, we pray that God will be with you on your journey. If you are seeking a church home, we would be happy to welcome you into our church community. If you are interested in joining with the First Family, call the church office...and please worship with us again.

**ALL BAPTIZED** worshipers who confess the presence of Christ in the bread and wine of communion are invited to commune. Children are invited to come forward for a blessing. Communicants, please complete a communion card.

**GLUTEN FREE COMMUNION WAFERS** are available for those people with allergies.

**PLEASE** remember to silence your cell phones before worship.

# ASH WEDNESDAY

March 5, 2025

11:00 AM and 6:00 PM

## GATHERING

*The congregation gathers in silence.*

Greeting

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray,

**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

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

**FIRST READING: 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?'"

The word of the Lord.

**R/Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm 51:1-17

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your <sup>1</sup> steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out <sup>1</sup> my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through <sup>1</sup> from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me <sup>1</sup> from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know <sup>1</sup> my offenses,  
and my sin is ev- <sup>1</sup> er before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil <sup>1</sup> in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right <sup>1</sup> in your judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born <sup>1</sup> steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my <sup>1</sup> mother's womb.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth <sup>1</sup> deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom <sup>1</sup> deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I <sup>1</sup> shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be pur- <sup>1</sup> er than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear <sup>1</sup> joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken <sup>1</sup> may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face <sup>1</sup> from my sins,  
and blot out <sup>1</sup> all my wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean <sup>1</sup> heart, O God,  
and renew a right spir- <sup>1</sup> it within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away <sup>1</sup> from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spir- <sup>1</sup> it from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of <sup>1</sup> your salvation  
and sustain me with your boun- <sup>1</sup> tiful Spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways <sup>1</sup> to offenders,  
and sinners shall be re- <sup>1</sup> stored to you.

<sup>14</sup>**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of <sup>1</sup> my salvation,  
and my tongue shall sing <sup>1</sup> of your righteousness.**

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, o- <sup>1</sup> pen my lips,  
and my mouth shall de- <sup>1</sup> clare your praise.

<sup>16</sup>**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or <sup>1</sup> I would give it.  
You are not pleased <sup>1</sup> with burnt offering.**

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a <sup>1</sup> troubled spirit;  
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will <sup>1</sup> not despise.

## **SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10**

<sup>20b</sup>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</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 word of the Lord.

**R/Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*Stand and recite in unison:*

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

P/ The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the sixth chapter.

**R/ Glory to you, O Lord.**

## **GOSPEL Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

“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.

P/ The Gospel of the Lord.

**R/ Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

**The glory of these forty days  
we celebrate with songs of praise;  
for Christ, through whom all things were made,  
himself has fasted and has prayed.**

**Alone and fasting Moses saw  
the loving God who gave the law;  
and to Elijah, fasting, came  
the steeds and chariots of flame.**

**So Daniel trained his mystic sight,  
delivered from the lions' might;  
and John, the Bridegroom's friend, became  
the herald of Messiah's name,**

**Then grant, O God, that we may, too,  
return in fast and prayer to you.  
Our spirits strengthen with your grace,  
and give us joy to see your face.**

### **Invitation to Lent**

*The assembly is seated. The presiding minister may invite the assembly into the discipline of Lent.*

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.



As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent--self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love--strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

### **Confession of Sin**

*The presiding minister leads the following or another confession.*

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

*The assembly kneels or sits. Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.*

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**

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

*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.**

*The presiding minister addresses the assembly.*

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.**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of our journeys, we pray for the church as the season of Lent begins. Guide your people in spiritual practices and preparation for baptism. Strengthen communities of faith in discipleship and witness for the sake of the gospel. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of creation, we pray for the earth. As you once brought forth life from the dust, breathe healing and renewal into all places where ecosystems are stretched and strained. Nurture organic cycles of life, death, and rebirth. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of the nations, we pray for an end to wars and occupations that reduce communities to ash. Turn leaders away from fearful decision-making, and lead all people into the justice and compassion of your reign. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of the suffering, we pray for all who live with any pain. Comfort people living with chronic or terminal illnesses, addictions, or anxiety. Grant that all who dwell in the dust of grief may know your presence there. We pray specifically for... God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

God of community, we pray for those who accompany the dying: for first responders, health care and hospice workers, chaplains, and those who facilitate burials of the dead. Sustain them as they serve their neighbors in life and death with dignity and care. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of the cross, we give thanks for those who have completed their lives on earth and have returned to you. Strengthen us with the promise that within the ashes of death are the seeds of resurrection life. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

**Amen.**

Peace

## The Offering

Offerings may be placed in the plates as they are passed. You can utilize your regular envelopes or the gold envelopes in the pews. You can also utilize our online giving tool through Tithe.ly by visiting [felchurch.org](http://felchurch.org) or utilize the QR code here:

Checks can also be mailed to: First Lutheran, 246 S. Main Street, Greensburg, PA 15601.

Thank you for your generous support of First's Ministry.



Offertory Response “Create in Me a Clean Heart” **ELW #186**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with your free Spirit.**

## Offering Prayer

Let us pray.

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.

**Amen.**

## Dialogue

*The presiding minister greets the assembly and invites all present to give thanks.*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

## Preface

*The presiding minister continues:*

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts  
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,  
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,  
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## Holy, Holy, Holy

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,  
but guided us into the path of love and light.

In every age you sent prophets  
to make known your loving will for all humanity.

The cry of the poor has become your own cry;  
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.

In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant  
to preach good news to the afflicted,  
to break bread with the outcast and despised,  
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

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 all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup  
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,  
we await the day when Jesus shall return  
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.  
Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.

**Amen.**

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,  
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup  
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.  
Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.

**Amen.**

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every  
age, that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection, we might live in  
the freedom and hope of your Son. Through him, with him, in him, in  
the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty  
Father, now and forever.

**Amen.**



## THE 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.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The gifts of God for the people of God. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

## COMMUNION

*All baptized who wish to receive the body and blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and the nourishment of their lives are welcome. It is not necessary to be a member of First Lutheran to receive the sacrament.*

For those receiving the sacrament please note the following:  
Communion is at the rail for those who desire.

- *We encourage everyone to continue using hand sanitizer before coming forward for communion.*
- *As you approach the chancel, take a plastic cup from the tray.*
- *The communion rail will fill from both sides of the congregation.*

- *We encourage everyone to leave added space at the rail, primarily between family units.*
- *For those who need gluten free or grape juice, please tell the Pastor or assistant during the distribution.*
- *Cups can be placed in the trays near each side aisle as you return to your pew.*
- *For those who would like to receive communion, but are not comfortable coming to the rail, please let an Usher know so that the Pastor and Assisting Minister can bring communion to you.*

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*and each person may respond*

**Amen.**

## **PRAYER**

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept.*

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, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

# SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

## 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.**

## POSTLUDE

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## MIDWEEK LENTEN WORSHIP

You are invited to join us on Wednesday evenings in Lent beginning March 12<sup>th</sup> for worship at 6:00 PM.