



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.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

February 22, 2023– 7:00 PM

Ash Wednesday ~ February 22, 2023

Gathering: The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

We Gather Tonight in Silence

Please spend some time listening for what God might be saying to you in the silence. To begin our worship, the choirs will sing Psalm 51.

Call to Worship

The Lord God formed humans from the dust of the ground.

God breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, and we became living beings.

Made from the dust, but filled with the Spirit, we gather for worship and community.
And if we do not worship, the dust itself will rise up in praise.

In this moment we are living and conscious, proclaiming God's goodness to all creation.

And when we return to dust and bones, our stories will testify to love and justice.

So, breathe in the Holy Spirit, knowing you are alive for a moment in time.

We breathe and know these things to be true. Let us worship the Life-Giver together. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

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

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?’ ”

Reader: “*The Word of the Lord.*” Response: “*Thanks be to God.*”

The Cantor will lead the Canticle, please respond with this refrain when indicated:

Canticle of Joel



Second 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.

Reader: “*The Word of the Lord.*” Response: “*Thanks be to God.*”

Lenten Acclamation



Noth-ing in all cre - a - tion can sep - a - rate us from the love of God.



Noth-ing in all cre - a - tion can sep - a - rate us from the love of God.

Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Response after announcement of the Gospel: "Glory to you, O Lord."

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."

Response at the conclusion of the Gospel: "Praise to you, O Christ."

Homily

Pastor Jon Nelson

Before you turn to the next hymn, please take time during the silence: What are your prayers in response to the sermon? The hymn will be announced in a few moments.

Invitation to Lent

Confession of Sin

Ash Wednesday provides us with the gift of time and space for repentance. Let us prepare our hearts for the season of Lent by confessing our sins:

Righteous God, we join with worshipers all over the globe, uniting in our collective agreement that we desire to be more like you—more loving, more compassionate, more generous, more just, more patient, more faithful. And as we focus our gaze upon your perfection, we cannot help but witness the ways in which we fail to live according to that standard, both individually and collectively. We have failed on a global scale, perpetuating systems that damage whole groups of people, whole species of creation, and whole generations of children.

(Silence)

We have failed on an individual scale in ways only we know in our minds and hearts.

(Silence)

So, we confess these sins with full conviction that you bear our sins with compassion and completion. And when we confess our sins, we find liberation from the chains binding us. We pray these things in the name of the one who delivers us from sin. Amen.

Bless the Lord, O friends of God, and do not forget all God's benefits—
who forgives all our iniquity,
who heals all our diseases,
who redeems our lives from the Pit,
who crowns us with steadfast love and mercy.
Receive the peace of the complete pardon of Christ. **Amen.**



Imposition of Ashes

At this time, if you desire to receive ashes, please come forward and kneel at the altar rail.

The pastor applies ashes to the forehead of each person with the words:

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

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 Prayers

Please offer prayers, from where you are standing. Please end your petition with:

*“Lord, in your mercy.” All will respond: **“Hear our prayer.”***

Meal: God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

Offering

Anthem

O, My God, Bestow thy Tender Mercy from “Stabat Mater”

Pergolesi/Hopson

Matins & Chancel Choirs

Offertory Prayer

Great Thanksgiving

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.



It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



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

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Blessed are you, O God of the Universe.

Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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 in 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 in remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover
from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

O God of resurrection and new life:
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.
Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.
Breathe new life into us.
Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.
Come, Holy Spirit.

With St. Stephen and your holy ones of all times and places,
with the earth and all its creatures,
with sun and moon and stars,
we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.
Amen.

The Lords 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.
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.

Holy Communion

When receiving Communion, either stand or kneel at the Rail. Pastor will distribute the bread and a Communion Assistant will come with a tray of pre-filled cups of wine and grape juice. The juice will be in the middle of the tray. Gluten-free wafers are available as an alternative to bread. St. Stephen is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, so all are welcome to receive Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper.

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Communion Music *Savior, When in Dust to You* setting, Jerry van der Pol

To You All Hearts Are Open

To you all hearts are o - pen, to
you all de - sires known. To you there are no
se - crets, al - might - y God; we come to you. *Last time*

Table Blessing

Prayer After Communion

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.

Amen.

Blessing

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

Sending: *God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world*

Sending Hymn

On My Heart Imprint Your Image

Hymn 811
Bulletin page 13

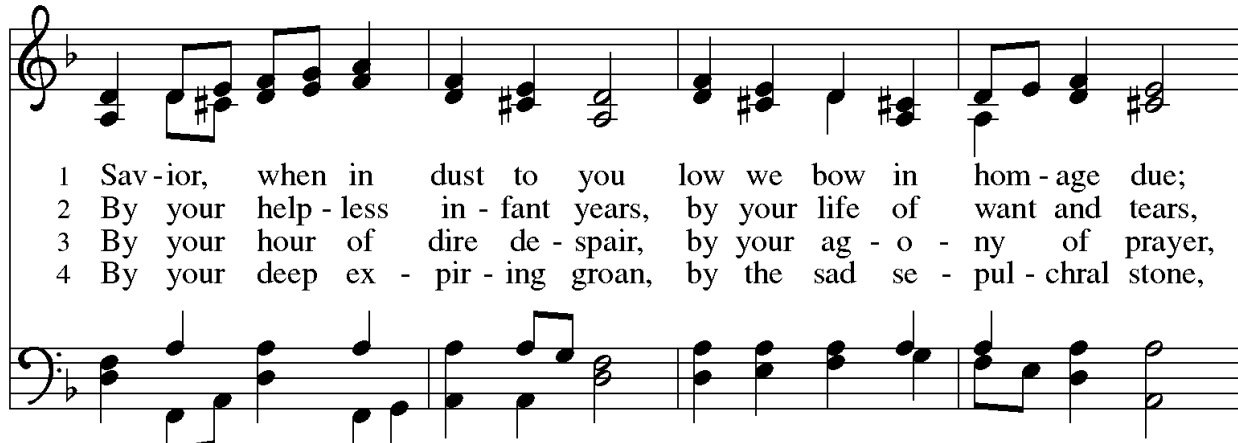
Dismissal

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.

Please depart in silent reflection



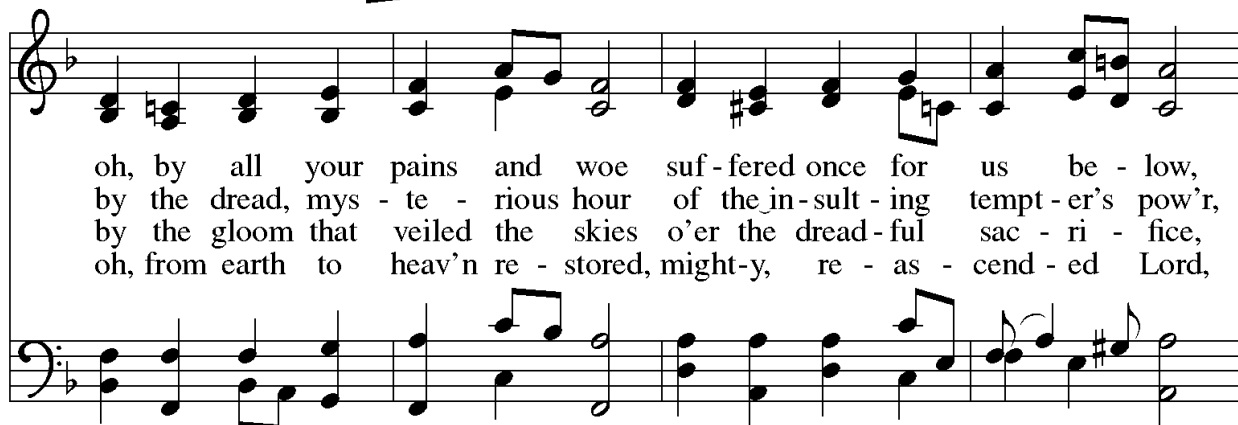
Savior, When in Dust to You



1 Sav - ior, when in dust to you low we bow in hom - age due;
2 By your help - less in - fant years, by your life of want and tears,
3 By your hour of dire de - spair, by your ag - o - ny of prayer,
4 By your deep ex - pir - ing groan, by the sad se - pul - chral stone,



when, re - pen - tant, to the skies scarce we lift our weep - ing eyes;
by your days of deep dis - tress in the sav - age wil - der - ness,
by the cross, the nail, the thorn, pierc - ing spear, and tor - turing scorn,
by the vault whose dark a - bode held in vain the ris - ing God,



oh, by all your pains and woe suf - fered once for us be - low,
by the dread, mys - te - rious hour of the in - sult - ing tempt - er's pow'r,
by the gloom that veiled the skies o'er the dread - ful sac - ri - fice,
oh, from earth to heav'n re - stored, might - y, re - as - cend - ed Lord,



bend - ing from your throne on high, hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!
turn, oh, turn a fa - v'ring eye; hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!
lis - ten to our hum - ble sigh; hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!
bend - ing from your throne on high, hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!

On My Heart Imprint Your Image



On my heart im - print your im - age, bless - ed Je - sus, king of grace,



that life's trou - bles nor its plea - sures ev - er may your work e - rase.



Let the clear in - scrip - tion be: Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me,



is my life, my hope's foun - da - tion, all my glo - ry and sal - va - tion!

Text: Thomas H. Kingo, 1634–1703; tr. Peer O. Strømme, 1856–1921, alt.
Music: DER AM KREUZ, Johann B. König, 1691–1758

Leading our Worship and Hospitality This Evening

Acolyte/Crucifer.....Vee Nelson
Altar Guild Carol Wiers
Audio-Visual Team.....
Bread Baker..... Pat Fretz
CantorEricka Cave
Communion Assistants Carol Wiers and Pam Buckley
LectorNathaniel Ingle



Upcoming Commemorations

Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, died 156

Thursday, February 23, 2023

Because he is said to have been known by John, the author of Revelation, as well as the important early church fathers Irenaeus and Ignatius, Polycarp serves as a vital link in church history. He was burned at the stake at age 86 for refusing to renounce his faith.

Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, died 1921

Saturday, February 25, 2023

Born in Norway and trained there as a deaconess, Fedde was asked to come and minister to the poor and to seamen in New York City. She established the Deaconess House in Brooklyn as well as Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis.

George Herbert, hymnwriter, died 1633

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

An excellent scholar, Herbert served briefly in the English parliament, then became a parish priest. He was known for devoted care of his parishioners, as well as for writing poetry and hymns, including "Come, my way, my truth, my life." He died at age 40.

John Wesley, died 1791; Charles Wesley, died 1788; renewers of the church

Thursday, March 2, 2023

These brothers led a revival originally intended to remain within the Church of England, one that involved frequent communion and advocacy for the poor. Except for a brief time in America, they worked in England. Charles was also a prolific hymn writer. After their deaths, their work led to the formation of the Methodist Church.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

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**We gather to worship and study God's Word to deepen our faith and live our
Christian witness and service in the community.**

(St. Stephen Lutheran Church Vision Statement)

All of Us, Called Through Our Baptisms

Pastor Jon Nelson (320-295-8861)

Karen Ives – Director of Music (757-229-6688)

Hollie Jones – Parish Administrator (229-6688)

Diana Tiller-Dichtel – Parish Nurse (232-5924)

Kristie Kelley – Preschool Director (229-6688)

Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center (873-2273; counselors are in Williamsburg on Thursdays)

Doing Ministry in the World

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