



**Be
reconciled
to God.**

2 Corinthians 5:20

Epiphany Lutheran Church

6606 Maplecrest Road

Fort Wayne, IN 46835

(260) 485-5122

www.epiphanyfw.com

Welcome – we're glad you're here!

Ash Wednesday

March 5, 2025

Worship on Sundays: 8:00 & 10:15 am

Lenten Supper 6:00 pm Vespers 6:30 pm

Pastor - Richard L Hartman



Hymns and liturgy for this evening's service are found in
the Lutheran Book of Worship (green hymnal)

✠ IN NOMINE JESU ✠

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.



SILENT PRAYER

Please silently pray the following prayer as you wait for our service to begin.

Lord, remove all distractions from my mind and my life. Enable me to concentrate on your Word, that I may worship you with my whole being in Spirit and Truth. Amen.

OPENING DIALOGUE (P: Pastor, C: Congregation)

P: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,

C: and his mercy endures forever.

P: They cried to the Lord in their trouble,

C: and he delivered them from their distress.

P: He sent forth his Word and healed them,

C: and saved them from the grave.

P: The Lord is righteous in all his ways,

C: and loving in all his works.

P: The Lord upholds all who fall;

C: he lifts up those who are bowed down.

P: The Lord sustains them on their sickbed,

C: and ministers to them in their illness.

P: The Lord is my strength and my song,

C: and he has become my salvation.

P: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,

C: and his mercy endures forever. Amen.

GREETING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray together the Prayer of the Day:

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.

HYMN 99 “O Lord, throughout These Forty Days” (Green Hymnal)

**O Lord, throughout these forty days you prayed and kept the fast.
Inspire repentance for our sin, and free us from our past.**

**You strove with Satan and you won, your faithfulness endured.
Lend us your nerve, your skill and trust in God’s eternal Word.**

**Though parched and hungry, yet you prayed and fixed your mind above.
So, teach us to deny ourselves that we may know God’s love.**

**Be with us through this season, Lord, and all our earthly days.
That when the final Easter dawns, we join in heaven’s praise.**

FIRST READING

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community declares that God is gracious and asks God to spare the people lest the nations doubt God’s power to save.

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— 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.

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 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. 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? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; 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. 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?’”

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God’s reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 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! We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holi-

ness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

P: The Gospel for this Ash Wednesday evening is taken from the gospel of Matthew, the 6th chapter, beginning with the 1st verse.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

“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. “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. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“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. 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.

“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. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,¹⁸ 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.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN 91 “*Savior, When in Dust to You*” (Green Hymnal)
Savior, when in dust to you low we bow in homage due.
When, repentant, to the skies scarce we lift our weeping eyes.
Oh, by all your pains and woe suffered once for us below,
Bending from your throne on high, hear our penitential cry!

By your helpless infant years, by your life of want and tears,
By your days of deep distress in the savage wilderness,
By the dread, mysterious hour of the insulting tempter’s pow’r,
Turn, oh turn a fav’ring eye. Hear our penitential cry!

By your hour of dire despair, by your agony of prayer,
By the cross, the nail, the thorn, piercing spear, and torturing scorn,
By the gloom that veiled the skies o'er the dreadful sacrifice,
Listen to our humble sign. Here our penitential cry!

By your deep expiring groan, by the sad sepulchral stone,
By the vault whose dark abode held in vain the rising God,
Oh, from earth to heav'n restored, mighty, reascending Lord,
Bending from your throne on high. Hear our penitential cry!

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no
end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the
Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the
prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those who desire to receive the imposition of ashes should come forward

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 preparations 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 or illness, especially these members of
our Epiphany Lutheran Church family... **Sandi, Karen Barb, George, Sara, Steve, Vicki, Ayden**
and for those whom we now name from our hearts... Comfort people living with chronic or terminal
illnesses, addictions, or anxiety. Grant that all who dwell in the dust of grief may know your pres-
ence there. 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.**

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**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C: and also with you!



You are invited to share a greeting of peace with one another
OFFERINGS can be mailed, dropped off at church or sent through
our website at www.epiphanyfw.com.

6606 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46835

Place offerings in the basket on Baptismal Font.

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.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Let us confess our sin to God, the one who created us in his own image.

I confess to God Almighty, before this entire congregation in heaven and on earth, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed. These sins I have done are my own fault; wherefore I pray that Almighty God would have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

C: The Almighty and merciful God grant you pardon and forgiveness of all your sins. Amen.

I confess to you Almighty God, before the whole congregation in heaven and on earth, and to my fellow workers in Christ, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by my own fault. I pray that Almighty God will have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

P: The almighty and merciful God grant each of you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: and also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: we lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is good to give him thanks and praise.

P: *It is indeed right and salutary ...We praise your name and join their unending hymn: .*

**C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

THE 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.
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.**

THE DISTRIBUTION



***Everyone is welcome to come to the Lord's Table!
Those baptized who believe in the true presence of Christ
in the bread and wine are welcome to receive the elements.***

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

**P: Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in
our Lenten pilgrimage. May our fasting be hunger for justice, our alms a making
of peace, and our prayers lifted up with grateful hearts; through Jesus Christ our
Lord.**

C: Amen.

BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

**P: Jesus took the form of a servant and was obedient to death, even death on a cross. May you
follow his example and share in the resurrection.**

C: Amen.

P: Almighty God, the Father, ✠ the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Please exit the sanctuary in silence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LENTEN OUTREACH - We will collect Fishes and Loaves for Lent. Along with our usual tuna and Tuna Helper that we usually collect, other suggested items include rice, pasta, cereal, peanut butter, jelly, canned fruits and vegetables, and spaghetti sauce.



The Imposition of Ashes

Traditionally, the Christian Church has observed the six weeks before Easter as a time of penitence and spiritual self-examination.

Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, derives its name from the ancient practice of marking the foreheads of worshipers with ashes from the unused palm branches of the previous year. The use of ashes as a sign of repentance is often mentioned in Scripture (Job 42:6, Jeremiah 6:26, Matthew 11:21). The early Christian church accepted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence.

Why use such an ancient symbol now? In our time, ashes symbolize several aspects of our human experience. First, ashes remind us of God's condemnation of sin as God said to Adam, "*Dust you are and to dust you shall return.*" (Genesis 3:19) Second, ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. Ashes were used anciently in the absence of soap, and on Ash Wednesday the ashes are a penitential substitute for water as a reminder of our Baptism. Just as water both drowns and refreshes, so too ashes are a symbol of both death and renewal (as fields are sometimes burned in the spring to prepare for new growth). Third, ashes remind us of the shortness of human life — as we say at the time of the burial of the dead, "*We commit this body to the ground, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.*"

The Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday is a sign that we have confessed our sinfulness, an outward sign of inward penitence, as well as a sign that we are dying, and ourselves turning to ashes.

But Lent does not leave us on the ash heap. It begins with Ash Wednesday, but ends with Easter. And Easter proclaims that, through Christ, God resurrects us from our dust and ashes, makes us new creatures, and brings life out of death!