



Create in me  
*a pure heart,*  
O God,  
and renew a  
*steadfast spirit*  
within me.

Psalm 51:10, NIV

Zion St. John Lutheran Church

*Being the Body of Christ*

Pastor Kim Wills 422 Sherman St., Box 269, Sheffield, IA 50475  
Phone: 892-4010 Cell: 641-425-9453 Email: pastor@zionstjohn.org  
Leah Cruz: Director of Youth and Family Ministries  
Cell: 641-373-7015 Email: youth@zionstjohn.org

February 18, 2026 9:00 am Ash Wednesday

**Organist:** Charles S **Reader:** Diane W

**Acolyte:** Lillian W **Crucifer:** Sutton W

*This evening's service begins and ends in silence.  
Please enter and leave the church quietly.*

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**      *Living Bread*      ZSJ Chancel Choir

*Stand*

**PSALM 51:** (spoken responsively)

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

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

<sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight.**

<sup>5</sup>And so you are justified when you speak  
and upright in your judgment.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,  
a sinner from my mother's womb.**

<sup>7</sup>For behold, you look for truth deep within me,  
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

<sup>8</sup>**Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;  
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.**

- <sup>9</sup>Make me hear of joy and gladness,  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- <sup>10</sup>**Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.**
- <sup>11</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.
- <sup>12</sup>**Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**
- <sup>13</sup>Give me the joy of your saving help again  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
- <sup>14</sup>**I shall teach your ways to the wicked,  
and sinners shall return to you.**
- <sup>15</sup>Deliver me from death, O God, and my tongue shall sing of  
your righteousness, O God of my salvation.
- <sup>16</sup>**Open my lips, O Lord,  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**
- <sup>17</sup>Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,  
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
- <sup>18</sup>**The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

## **INVITATION TO THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE**

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

Let us kneel or stand before God, our creator and redeemer, and confess our sins.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

Most holy and merciful God, **we confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, 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 not listened 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**

We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives.

**Have mercy on us, O God**

We confess to you our self-indulgent appetites and ways, our exploitation of other people, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

**Have mercy on us, O God**

We confess to you our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us.

**Have mercy on us, O God**

We confess to you our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty. **Have mercy on us, O God**

We confess to you our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us. **Have mercy on us, O God**

We confess to you our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work. **Have mercy on us, O God**

We confess to you our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us. **Have mercy on us, O God**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

**Favorably hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

*Sit*

## **THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

*Those who desire to receive ashes come forward and kneel before the altar. The minister applies ashes to the forehead of each person with the words:*

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

*After all who desire ashes have received them, the minister leads the congregation in the conclusion of the confession.*

*Stand*

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 Christ's resurrection.**

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**

**OPENING HYMN** *O Lord Throughout These Forty Days* #319

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting 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**

**FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

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 relenting 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; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; <sup>16</sup>gather the people. Consecrate 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.

**Thanks be to God.**

**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 God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup> As we work together with him, we entreat 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."

Look, now is the acceptable time; look, 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: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup> beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup> in 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 look—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.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Stand*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,  
slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

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

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

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> “Beware of practicing your righteousness 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 somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

**HOMILY**

**HYMN**

*Chief of Sinners Though I Be*

#609

*Stand*

**THE PRAYERS**

Reconciled by God’s mercy and sustained by God’s presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*After each petition:* Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation. **Amen**

*Sit*

**OFFERING**

*O Man, Bewail Your Grievous Sin*

J. S. Bach

## OFFERTORY 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**

## 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 him thanks and praise.**

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

**Amen, Come, Lord Jesus.**

*Stand*

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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**

## 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.

---

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

*Sit*  
**COMMUNION**

*Stand*

## **POST-COMMUNION BLESSING/ PRAYER**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen**

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**

## **BENEDICTION**

In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

**We testify to the truth of Christ in court: in the chambers of our human hearts.**

So I say to you: Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you. And may the peace of Christ bless and keep you as you live your life as a testimony to him. **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 faint-hearted; 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.**

