

February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday



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.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

11 East Dawes Avenue, Somers Point, NJ 08244

Church Office: 609-927-3082 **Food Pantry:** 609-927-9982

Website: www.GraceLutheranSPNJ.org

E-mail: office@GraceLutheranSPNJ.org

Interim Pastor **†** Wendolyn Trozzo, Scott J. Breiner, Music Director
Corinne Rhodes, Administrative Assistant

We welcome you to worship here at Grace!

*Note that all text written in **bold** is for congregation participation.
Most of our hymn songs are found in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship
red hymnal found in the pews.
S=service music in the front part of the hymnal.*

GATHERING

Thank you for joining us as we worship our Lord together!

WELCOME

Rev. Jeffrey Eaton

PRELUDE

Lamb of God (Adagio for Strings)

by Samuel Barber

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESSiON AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:

Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:

Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One

who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN *On My Heart Imprint Your Image* **ELW #811**

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.**

Please be seated.

READING: Isaiah 58:1-12

¹ Shout out; do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they want God on their side.

³ “Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers.

⁴ You fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

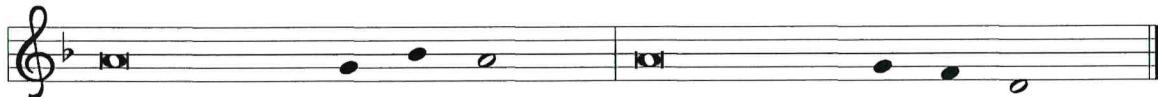
¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹ The LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 51:1-17



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

² Wash me through and through ¹ from my wickedness,
and cleanse me ¹ from my sin.

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

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

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

⁶ Indeed, you delight in truth ¹ deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom ¹ deep within.

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

⁸ Let me hear ¹ joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken ¹ may rejoice.

⁹ Hide your face ¹ from my sins,
and blot out ¹ all my wickedness.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean ¹ heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- ¹ it within me.

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

¹² Restore to me the joy of ¹ your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- ¹ tiful Spirit.

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

¹⁴ Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of ¹ my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing ¹ of your righteousness.

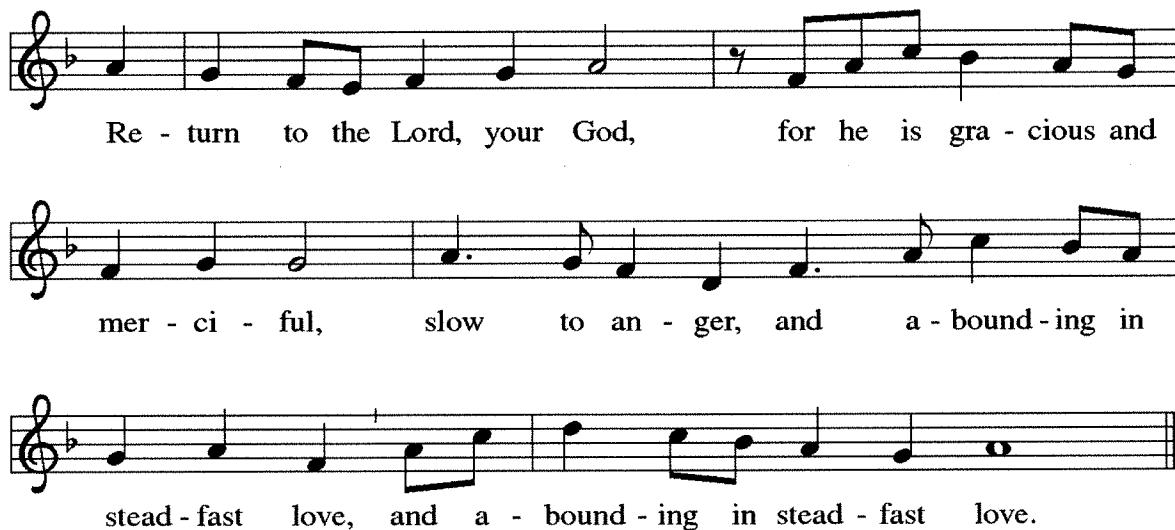
¹⁵ O Lord, o- ¹ pen my lips,
and my mouth shall pro- ¹ claim your praise.

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

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

Please stand as you are able.

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, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 6th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“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.

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 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. 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

SERMON *Dust and Ashes* Rev. Jeffrey Eaton

CHORAL ANTHEM *Dust and Ashes Touch Our Face* by Hal H. Hopson

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God* by Michael Bedford

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs. *Brief silence.*

At the end of each prayer petition when the worship assistant or pastor says, "Hear us, O God," please respond with "Your mercy is great."

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

HOLY COMMUNION

EUCARISTIC PRAYER

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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Please come forward via the center aisle at the direction of the usher. After consuming the bread, proceed to the Communion Assistants for the red wine or white grape juice (center of ring). Empty glasses may be placed in the empty tray. You may return to your seat via the side aisle. For those unable to come forward, please notify the usher and the Sacrament will be brought to you in the pew.

COMMUNION BLESSING

The Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

People may come forward and kneel or stand to receive the ashes. The Minister marks the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

SENDING

Please stand as you are able.

BLESSING

May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise + bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

Savior, When in Dust to You

ELW #601

DISMISSAL Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.