

February 22, 2023

LAKE OCONEE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Ash Wednesday

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

*God writes His Word on our Lives, building us into a Family engaged
in Spirit-filled Service.*



LAKE OCONEE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

1089 Lake Oconee Parkway

Eatonton, GA 31024

Church Office: 706-485-4600

Sonya Plunkett Church Secretary

www.lakeoconeelutheran.org

Office email: officelolc@gmail.com

Pastor Steven Hayden

Pastor's Cell: 515-360-5081

Pastor's email: revshayden@gmail.com

Lent is a season when we take a look at our lives in view of God's mercy toward us in the sacrifice of his Son for us on the cross. We, in turn, are called by God, especially during this time of repentance and reflection, to be living sacrifices for him, displaying our devotion to him in word and deed. Jesus helps us to see the richness of God's mercy in his life, death and resurrection.

In this service for Ash Wednesday in our *In View of God's Mercy* series, we look at our lives through the lens of God's love toward us in the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus. In this service, we consider the ashes placed on our foreheads as a sign of our sins and remember that God lifts us from our ashes to new life in Christ.

Ash Wednesday – Mercy in Ashes

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Joel 2:13

Invocation and Call to Worship

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Return to the Lord your God.

People: Christ crucified, I come.

Pastor: Behold his miracle of mercy.

People: Christ crucified, I come.

Pastor: Receive his gift of grace.

People: Christ crucified, I come.

Pastor: Abide in his steadfast love.

People: Christ crucified, I come.

Pastor: Rest in his unfailing faithfulness.

People: Christ crucified, I come.

Confession and Forgiveness

Pastor: “Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments” (Joel 2:12-13). As our Lord summons us to return to him with repentant hearts, we confess our sins and sorrow over them.

People: Almighty God, we are unclean before you. We are marred and marked by the filth of sin. We have turned away from you by disobeying your commandments. We have rebelled against you by seeking our own way rather than following your will. Forgive us.

Pastor: We cry out to you for mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

The Imposition Of Ashes

Pastor: The ashes symbolize our mourning for our sins. The sign of the cross symbolizes cleansing and renewal and points to the gift of forgiveness that God gives in Jesus Christ.

Those who wish to receive ashes should approach the altar.

If you prefer not to take part, please remain in your seats.

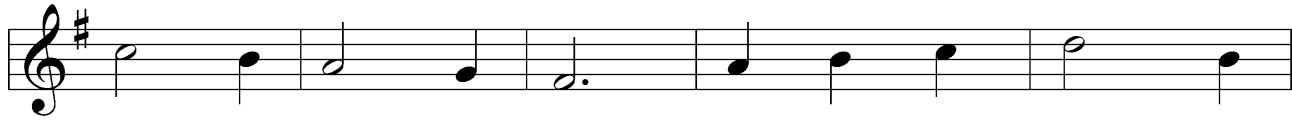
Pastor: Hear the good news! God’s Word declares that “he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” (Joel 2:13). In the mercy of Almighty God, his Son Jesus was given to die for you to remove the stain of your sin. For Christ’s sake God forgives you all your sin and renews a right spirit within you. His mercy endures forever because his love for you is steadfast.

People: Amen.

The Hymn "Drawn to the Cross, Which Thou Hast Blessed" Hymn 560



1 Drawn to the cross, which Thou hast blessed With heal - ing
2 Thou know - est all my griefs and fears, Thy grace a -
3 Wash me and take a - way each stain; Let noth - ing
4 And then for work to do for Thee, Which shall so



gifts for souls dis - tressed, To find in Thee my
bused, my mis - spent years; Yet now to Thee with
of my sin re - main. For cleans - ing, though it
sweet a ser - vice be That an - gels well might



life, my rest, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.
con - trite tears, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.
be through pain, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.
en - vy me, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.

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The Old Testament Reading

Joel 2:12-18

Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. 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; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep and say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their

God?" Then the Lord became jealous for his land and had pity on his people.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

The New Testament Reading

1 John 1:8-9

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel Reading

Matthew 6:16-18

And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

The Confession of Our Faith in The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Hymn

“Today Your Mercy Calls Us” Hymn 915



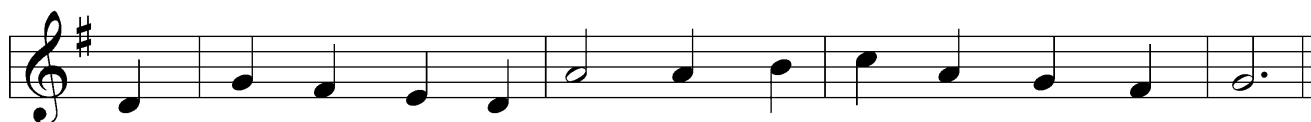
1 To - day Your mer - cy calls us To wash a - way our sin.
2 To - day Your gate is o - pen, And all who en - ter in
3 To - day our Fa - ther calls us; His Ho - ly Spir - it waits;
4 O all - em - brac - ing Mer - cy, O ev - er - o - pen Door,



How - ev - er great our tres - pass, What - ev - er we have been,
Shall find a Fa - ther's wel - come And par - don for their sin.
His bless - ed an - gels gath - er A - round the heav'n - ly gates.
What should we do with - out You When heart and eye run o'er?



How - ev - er long from mer - cy Our hearts have turned a - way,
The past shall be for - got - ten, A pres - ent joy be giv'n,
No ques - tion will be asked us How of - ten we have come;
When all things seem a - gainst us, To drive us to de - spair,



Your pre - cious blood can wash us And make us clean to - day.
A fu - ture grace be prom - ised, A glo - rious crown in heav'n.
Al - though we oft have wan - dered, It is our Fa - ther's home.
We know one gate is o - pen, One ear will hear our prayer.

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THE MESSAGE

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Almighty and merciful God, we approach your throne of grace today as sinners who require your cleansing.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love,
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my
sin.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall
be whiter than snow.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within
me.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy
Spirit from me.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a
willing spirit.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return
to you.

**People: Lord, grant me your grace both to will and to do what pleases
you.**

Pastor: All these things we pray in the name of Jesus, who cleanses us
from all unrighteousness.

People: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Pastor: Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

People: 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.

The Words of Institution

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

The Distribution of Communion

The Blessing

Pastor: May the merciful God, who is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, empower you to live

according to his good and gracious will, through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory forever.

People: Amen.

The Hymn “On My Heart Imprint Your Image” (422)



On my heart im - print Your im - age, Bless - ed Je - sus, King of grace,



That life's rich-es, cares, and plea-sures Nev - 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, And my glo - ry and sal - va - tion!

Text: Thomas Hansen Kingo, 1634-1703; tr. Peer O. Strømme, 1856-1921, alt.
Tune: Johann Balthasar König, 1691-1758
Text and tune: Public domain

Lenten Wednesday Services for this year:

Wednesday, 3/1 Lunch at 12pm and Worship at 1 pm

Wednesday, 3/8 Supper at 6pm and Worship at 7pm ,

Wednesday, 3/15 Lunch at 12pm and Worship at 1 pm.

Wednesday, 3/22 Supper at 6pm and Worship at 7pm,

Wednesday, 3/29 Lunch at 12pm and Worship at 1 pm

Join us next week in our In View of God's Mercy series for Lent, as we look at our lives through the lens of God's love toward us in the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus. In next week's service, we recall that in the midst of temptation, our merciful God provides us with a way out through Christ, who was tempted just as we are, yet without sin.