

Lake Oconee Lutheran Church

Ash Wednesday

Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." John 11:44

In this worship series for Lent and Holy Week, *To Seek and To Save*, follow Jesus as he turns toward Jerusalem and the cross. Walk in his footsteps, from the miracle of the raising of Lazarus to Jesus' own empty tomb on Easter morning. This was the purpose for which Jesus had come—to seek and to save the lost.

The Hymn **"Christ, the Life of All the Living"** # 420 v 1-2,7

Christ, the life of all the living, Christ, the death of death, our foe,
Who, Thyself for me once giving To the darkest depths of woe:
Through Thy suff'rings, death, and merit I eternal life inherit.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Thou, ah! Thou, hast taken on Thee Bonds and stripes, a cruel rod;
Pain and scorn were heaped upon Thee, O Thou sinless Son of God!
Thus didst Thou my soul deliver From the bonds of sin forever.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Then, for all that wrought my pardon, For Thy sorrows deep and sore,
For Thine anguish in the Garden, I will thank Thee evermore,
Thank Thee for Thy groaning, sighing, For Thy bleeding and Thy dying,
For that last triumphant cry, And shall praise Thee, Lord, on high.

Public domain

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: As we begin this Lenten season of repentance, let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness for the sake of Jesus our Savior.

C: Almighty God, we sin against you every day in our thoughts, words and actions. Instead of following your will and listening to your Word, we follow our own sinful desires and listen to the temptations of the world around us. Have mercy on us and wash us clean from our sins. Help us to grow in grace and to walk in your ways.

The Imposition of Ashes (optional)

P: 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.

P: God has had mercy on us, sending his Son to be our Savior. Jesus suffered and died on the cross for the sins of the world, for your sins and mine. He rose from death to defeat the power of sin and death. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, you despise nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that, lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, we may receive from you full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Old Testament Reading

Ezekiel 37:11-14

¹¹ Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' ¹² Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

The Epistle Reading

Romans 6:3-8

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

The Gospel Reading

John 11:20-27, 38-44

²⁰ So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." ... ³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." ⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

The Hymn

“Chief of Sinners Though I Be”

611 v 1-2, 5

Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed His blood for me,
Died that I might live on high, Lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.

Oh, the height of Jesus' love, Higher than the heav'ns above,
Deeper than the depths of sea, Lasting as eternity!
Love that found me—wondrous thought!
Found me when I sought Him not.

O my Savior, help afford By Your Spirit and Your Word!
When my wayward heart would stray, Keep me in the narrow way;
Grace in time of need supply While I live and when I die.

Public domain

The Message

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 Offering

The Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

The Words of Institution

The Distribution Hymn

“Jesus Grant That Balm and Healing” #421

Jesus, grant that balm and healing In Your holy wounds I find,
Ev'ry hour that I am feeling Pains of body and of mind.
Should some evil thought within Tempt my treach'rous heart to sin,
Show the peril, and from sinning Keep me from its first beginning.
Should some lust or sharp temptation Fascinate my sinful mind,
Draw me to Your cross and passion, And new courage I shall find.
Or should Satan press me hard, Let me then be on my guard,
Saying, “Christ for me was wounded,” That the tempter flee confounded.
If the world my heart entices With the broad and easy road,
With seductive, sinful vices, Let me weigh the awful load
You were willing to endure. Help me flee all thoughts impure
And to master each temptation, Calm in prayer and meditation.
Ev'ry wound that pains or grieves me By Your wounds, Lord, is made whole;
When I'm faint, Your cross revives me, Granting new life to my soul.
Yes, Your comfort renders sweet Ev'ry bitter cup I meet;
For Your all-atoning passion Has procured my soul's salvation.
O my God, my rock and tower, Grant that in Your death I trust,
Knowing death has lost its power Since You crushed it in the dust.
Savior, let Your agony Ever help and comfort me;
When I die be my protection, Light and life and resurrection.

Public domain

The Benediction (Romans 6:4-5; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

P: We were buried therefore with [Christ] by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,

C: We too might walk in newness of life.

P: For if we have been united with him in a death like his,

C: We shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

P: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: Amen.

The Closing Hymn “On My Heart Imprint Your Image”

#422

On my heart imprint Your image, Blessèd Jesus, King of grace,
That life’s riches, cares, and pleasures Never may Your work erase;
Let the clear inscription be: Jesus, crucified for me,
Is my life, my hope’s foundation, And my glory and salvation!

Public domain