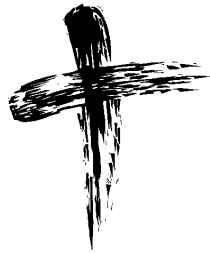


ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026 ❖ 12 Noon & 7:00 pm



Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter.

As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord.

During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection.

The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty.

What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness.

With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.



St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

700 Pleasure Road + Lancaster, PA

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St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

Lancaster, PA

Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026—12pm, 7pm

* *Indicates please stand as you are able.*

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

PRELUDE

12:00 Noon – *Elegy*

Jules Massenet
arr. David Sarandon

7:00 pm – *Love is Here*

Gregory Norbet and
Mary David Callahan

GATHERING

***INVOCATION**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God,
who brings us out of captivity into freedom,
out of the wilderness into the promised land,
out of death into life.

Amen.

***GREETING**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: ***And also with you.***

***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.

People: ***Amen.***

WORD

First Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

- ¹Blow 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—
²a 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.
- ¹²Yet even now, says the LORD,
 return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³rend 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.
- ¹⁴Who 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?
- ¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶gather 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.
- ¹⁷Between 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?'"

Reader: Word of God; Word of Life.

People: ***Thanks be to God.***

Psalm: Psalm 51:1-17

Read responsively

- 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.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

^{20b} We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For
our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him

we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For 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! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Reader: Word of God; Word of Life.

People: *Thanks be to God*

***Gospel Acclamation**

p. 205b

***We are turning, Lord, to hear you;
you are merciful and kind
Slow to anger, rich in blessing,
and with love to us inclined.***

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

People: *Glory to you, O Lord.*

Gospel: Matthew 6:19-21

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.”

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord

PEOPLE: *Praise to you, O Christ.*

SERMON

INVITATION TO LENT

CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,

Have mercy on us.

***We confess to you and to one another,
and before the whole company of heaven,
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 shut our ears 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.

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

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

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

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

Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Bless these ashes and those who receive them. May this sign of our mortality and repentance remind us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Please come forward, if desired, and kneel or stand to receive the ashes.

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

After all who desire ashes have received them, the minister continues.

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 his 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.

***PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

Between each petition the following is said:

Asst. Min.: Hear us, O God,
People: ***Your mercy is great.***

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

***HYMN RESPONSE** *O Lord, Hear My Prayer*

ELW #751

SPECIAL MUSIC

12:00 Noon – *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* arr. John Turner

7:00 pm -- *Come to Me* Gregory Norbet and
Mary David Callahan

PREPARING THE TABLE

***OFFERING PRAYER** Spoken in Unison

**O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.
Through these gifts of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.**

***The Great Thanksgiving** Spoken

Pastor: The Lord be with you.
People: ***And also with you.***
Pastor: Lift up your hearts.
People: ***We lift them to the Lord.***
Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: ***It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...we praise your name and
join their unending hymn:

***Sanctus**

p. 207a

*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, Hosanna in the highest.*

***Eucharistic Prayer**

***LORD'S PRAYER**

Spoken in Unison

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us.

*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.

People: *Thanks be to God.*

SHARING OF THE SACRAMENT

***TABLE BLESSING**

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Spoken in Unison

**God of our salvation,
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.
Through the body and blood of your Son,
may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.**

***BENEDICTION**

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:
God, who calls all things into existence,
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,
and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,
✠ bless you now and always.

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Believe the good news.
Thanks be to God.

PLEASE LEAVE IN SILENCE...
GOD IS WITH YOU.

St. Matthew Lutheran Church Statement of Welcome, Affirmation and Full Participation



Welcome to St Matthew, the little church
with a big heart.



We are a Reconciling in Christ (Open and Affirming)
congregation, so when we say "all are welcome",
we really mean it.

We strive to live that out in our actions as well as our words. We
publicly and humbly commit to do what it takes to truly be a
sanctuary filled with warmth, love, understanding, safety,
respect and care for all who enter here.

*(Please see our Full Statement of Welcome, Affirmation and Full
Participation on our website: www.stmatthewelc.com. Copies of the
Full Statement are also available in the Education and*

Weekly Prayer List

Sean Carter. Sarah Challenger, Don Dubs,
James & Mabel Frazier, Ruth Graver,
Heather Hildebrand, Tim Kauffman,
Debbie LaNasa, Anna Neal, Bill Overly, Diane Repp,
Buzz Rothweiler, Bob & Carolyn Sampson,
Brian Schmoyer, Addie & Ella Schmoyer,
Steve Schweers, Betty Sheaffer and Shirley Wertz

2026 Lent/ Easter Dates

March 28, 29 - Palm Weekend

April 2 - Maundy Thursday

April 3 - Good Friday

April 4 & 5 -Easter



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Altar Care for : Barb Elsen & Carol Rothweiler

12 Noon

Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles

Greeter: Kay Gontner

Usher: OPEN

Reader: Peg Sampson

7 PM

Assisting Minister: Barb Elsen

Greeter: Laurie LaBar

Usher: OPEN

Reader: Linda Tice

2/18 Ash Wednesday

12:00pm Worship

7:00pm Worship

2/19 Thursday

6:30pm Vocal Choir

2/21 Saturday

2:00pm Quilting Workshop

5:00pm Worship

2/22 Sunday

10:00am Worship

Scripture Readings— February 21-22, 2026

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalms 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

**Events scheduled for outside groups that use
our facility. You are welcome to attend or sign up for
all other events on the calendar.*