

 **St. Paul Lutheran Church**

 **Pontiac, IL**

 **March 2, 2022**

 **Ash Wednesday**

**We gather to worship, reach out, and serve the Lord.**

**Welcome**

Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church. Whether you have worshiped with us many times, or this is your first time, there is a place for you here. Your presence among us is a gift.

**Introduction to the Day**

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.

**Greeting**

L: The Lord be with you.

**A: And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

L: Let us pray.

 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.

**A: Amen.**

**First Reading – Isaiah 58: 1-12**

1Shout 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.
 2Yet 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 delight to draw near to God.
 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.
 4Look, 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.
 5Is 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?

 6Is not this the fast that I choose:
  to loose the bonds of injustice,
  to undo the thongs of the yoke,
 to let the oppressed go free,
  and to break every yoke?
 7Is 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?
 8Then 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.
 9Then 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,
 10if 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.
 11The 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.
 12Your 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.

L:Word of God, word of life.

A**: Thanks be to God.**

*Please rise as you are able for the reading of the Holy Gospel.*

**Gospel Acclamation** ELW p 125



**Gospel–Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21**

L: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**A: Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 1“Beware of practicing your piety 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 dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as 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.”

*As the Gospel reading concludes...*

L: The gospel of the Lord.

**A: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Reflection Pastor Mathew Berger**

**Hymn of the Day Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service ELW 712**

**Invitation to Lent**

**Confession of Sin** ELW p 252

**Imposition of Ashes**

*People may come forward to receive the ashes.*

**Prayers** ELW p 254

**Lord's Prayer**  ELW p 255

**Blessing and Dismissal** ELW p 255

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Thank you to all those who contributed to today’s service.