

St. Paul Lutheran Smithville



February 18, 2026

Prelude:

“Open My Eyes That I May See”

performed by the Celebration Handbells

*** *Call to Worship and Confession***

P: Here we stand in the presence of God:
formed in God’s image, filled with God’s Spirit and gathered
together in love.

A: We come here to begin, again, the season of Lent,
to remember the one who came to save us,
to not look away as he turns toward the cross,
but to watch as he leads us past death to salvation.

**C: Now as we gather, we look toward him, and wonder,
when God looks at us, what sin does he see that separates
us from his goodness?**

P: By grace, God calls us from grief into gladness, from despair into
hope.

A: And by God’s grace, we stand in the mystery of the divine and
confess:

C: Holy God, have mercy on us.

P: For self-centered living and for thinking that we are better than others,

A: For failure to live in humility and gentleness with you, our God,
and with our fellow humans:

C: Have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and turn us toward you.

P: For longing to have what is not ours, and for not appreciating the gifts God has given to us,

A: For the misuse of human relationships and for an unwillingness to see the image of God in others:

C: Have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and turn us toward you.

P: For jealousies, rivalries and anger that divide families and nations,

A: For lies, betrayals and judgmental speaking that sows seeds of mistrust, hurt and fear.

C: Have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and turn us toward you.

P: For reluctance to share the gifts of God and for carelessness with your creation,

A: For the times we have not trusted in God to provide enough for our needs and the needs of others,

C: Have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and turn us toward you.

P: For idleness in witnessing to Jesus Christ and for squandering the gifts of love and grace that were so freely given to us,

A: For hoarding salvation as our private gift and refusing to tell others of the hope we have found in you,

C: Have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and turn us toward you.

P: Loving God we confess that we have not lived into our calling or up to our potential,

A: we have not loved you more than all things.

P: May God turn us from our sin, from all temptation and use our lives as beacons of light in this world of darkness.

C: Amen.

****Greeting***

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God,

C: you do not hate anything you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who turn from sin and return to your way. 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 forgiveness of our sins and the gift of a restored life, a gift from our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

****Imposition of Ashes:***

P: Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Without you, dust is all that will ever become of us. May these ashes not just leave a mark on our skin but a brand on our hearts; that we may leave remembering that the cost of our sin is death and that you loved us enough to purchase our life with your blood. We are unworthy of that love, Lord, yet even now we come to you, humbled and full of regret. Change our hearts even as we turn from our sin and embrace your life.

C: Let it be so, Lord. Change our hearts, accept our lives as our offering.

You may come forward and stand to receive the ashes.

*After those who desire ashes have received them,
all may sit and reflect in silence until the minister continues.*

We ask the choir to come forward to receive the ashes first.

Solo:

“Ashes to Ashes”

Lesley Mast

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Choir:

“Lenten Meditation”

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Words and Music by Jay Althouse

P: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

C: that we may show your glory to the world.

P: By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

C: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

P: 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.

C: Amen.

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?' "

R: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Responsive Reading: Psalm 51:1-17

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

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

R: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

**C: Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil
in your sight,**

R: so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you
pass judgment.

C: Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

R: You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in
my secret heart.

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

R: Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have
crushed rejoice.

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

R: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit
within me.

**C: Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take
your holy spirit from me.**

R: Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

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

R: Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

C: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

R: For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

C: The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

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

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

⁶As 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.

R: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Please rise for the Gospel Acclamation

***Gospel Acclamation:** “If We Live”

The musical score consists of three staves of music in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are integrated into the music, with each line of text corresponding to a staff. The first staff begins with 'If we live,' followed by 'we live to the Lord.' The second staff begins with 'If we die,' followed by 'we die to the Lord.' The third staff begins with 'So then, wheth-er we live or die - er we die,' followed by 'we are the Lord's.' Measure numbers 3 are indicated above the second and third staves.

Text: Rolf Vegdahl, b. 1955, based on Romans 14:8, Psalm 103

Music: IF WE LIVE, Rolf Vegdahl

Music © 2009, 2016 Augsburg Fortress

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the sixth chapter.

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

***Gospel Reading:** Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

[Jesus said to the disciples] "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.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon: Pastor Kristy Buyok

***Hymn of the Day:** # 608 “Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”



1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for



you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain



watch - ing for you and for me.
mer - cies for you and for me? “Come home, come home!
par - don for you and for me.



You who are wea - ry, come home.” Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, “O sin - ner, come home!”

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847–1909

Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson

The Apostle's Creed

A: Together, let us confess the belief that we share in this family of faith.

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

*(The words “catholic” and “apostolic” do not reference a particular denomination
but mean: catholic = “one universal church” and
apostolic = “the same faith that was handed down from Jesus to the Apostles”)*

***The Prayers**

A: Let us pray: O God you call us together to remember who we are without you. Let us never put anything in this world above your eternal calling to live as a people united in love for you and our neighbor. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Renew the Earth, O God. Bring life out of the damaged places, restore what has been broken and inspire your people to repair what has been harmed, that all may live in safety. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Raise up and inspire the nations' leaders to work toward justice, peace and cooperation. Put an end to violence, lies, war and greed. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Hear the cries of all who suffer and send your people to come to their aid. We lift up those who are persecuted, those who are physically or mentally ill, those who suffer from addiction or poverty, and those who feel isolated or unloved. Guard over them and give them what they need. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Renew this congregation. Inspire us to see and act on opportunities to make you known and in ways to share your kindness with the people around us. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Lord God we give you thanks that our loved ones who have gone before us were more than dust to you and for the promises you have made and kept to bring them home into eternal glory where we will meet again. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

P: We offer all of these prayers to you, our Savior. We know that you love us, that you hear us, and that you want what is best for us.

C: Amen.

****The Lord's Prayer***

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray,

C: Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name,
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.

 Give us this day our daily bread;
 forgive us our sins,
 as we forgive those
 who sin against us;
 save us from the time of trial,
 but deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. Amen.

Offering

Offertory Hymn: “Restore in Us, O God”



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -
2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from
3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -
4 Three-per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.
fruit-less fear un - furl our lives like spring-time bud and flow'r.
tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.
we, when all our search-ing ends, may see you face to face.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: BAYLOR, Hal H. Hopson, b. 1933

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**Offertory Prayer*

P: Let us pray. Merciful God,

C: receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

P: May God who has called us out of dust, and claimed us as children of the light, strengthen you on your journey into a renewed life. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

**Sending Hymn:* # 606 “Our Father, We Have Wandered”



1 Our Fa - ther, we have wan - dered and hid - den from your face;
2 And now at length dis - cern - ing the e - vil that we do,
3 O Lord of all the liv - ing, both ban - ished and re - stored,



in fool-ish-ness have squan - dered your leg - a - cy of grace.
be - hold us, Lord, re - turn - ing with hope and trust to you.
com - pas - sion - ate, for - giv - ing, and ev - er - car - ing Lord,



But now, in ex - ile dwell - ing, we rise with fear and shame,
In haste you come to meet us and home re - joic - ing bring,
grant now that our trans - gress - ing, our faith - less - ness may cease.



as, dis - tant but com - pel - ling, we hear you call our name.
in glad-ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.
Stretch out your hand in bless - ing, in par - don, and in peace.

Text: Kevin Nichols, 1929–2006

Music: HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN, Hans Leo Hassler, 1564–1612

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****Invitation to Remove Ashes and Receive the Healing Promises of Christ***

P: Our Savior reminded us to beware of practicing our piety before others in an effort to be seen

A: and we are also reminded that we have been marked with the cross of Christ and the seal of the Holy Spirit, our whole life long.

P: Tonight as you exit the worship space, go slowly, take your time. Use this quiet time as a moment to rest with God.

A: We invite you to stop at the baptismal font, take a cloth, dip it into the water from the font and remember that you are loved beyond measure.

P: Remember that you are claimed as a child of God,

A: but the cost of redemption was high.

P: You have been forgiven and washed clean.

A: See your image in the mirror and remember, you were created in the image of God.

P: You are a people created to be holy to the Lord your God.

A: Look at the cross of ash and remember that God was not willing to lose you.

P: Even if the path to redemption led first to the cross.

A: Remember as you wipe the ashes from your head, the cost of our forgiveness

P: Then go into your Lenten journey, restored and made whole by the loving grace of our God.

A: Who was not willing to leave us as ashes but who came to set us free from sin and death,

P: And to offer us new life.

C: Thanks be to God! Make our lives worthy of the love that you have given us. Amen.

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