

ASH WEDNESDAY
February 18, 2026
7:00 PM

MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
34 E. Orange Street
Shippensburg, PA 17257-1993
Web Site memluth.org
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Welcoming all
Reaching out in love
Growing together in Christ
Worshiping and serving in Jesus' name

The Reverend Godfred Effisah
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Welcome to Memorial Lutheran Church. As you prepare for Worship, please silence your cell phone.

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.

The assembly gathers in silence.

PRELUDE “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

- Wood

Please stand as you are able.

GATHERING HYMN “Chief of Sinners Though I Be”

ELW 609

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and the + Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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 obtain from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

PSALM OF CONFESSION 51:1-17

READ RESPONSIVELY

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

²**Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

³For I know my offenses,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your
sight; so you are justified when you speak and right in your
judgment.**

⁵Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my mother's womb.

⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

⁸**Let me hear joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

⁹Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my wickedness.

¹⁰**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**

¹¹Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹²**Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

¹³Let me teach your ways to offenders,
and sinners shall be restored to you.

¹⁴**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

¹⁵O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

¹⁶**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.
You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it
was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

EXHORTATION

Brothers and sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of his creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors and creation, and so we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgement, but turn to him and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from the love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent: Self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love -- strengthened by the gift of word and sacrament. Let us continue our Lenten journey through these forty days to the great Three days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Silence for reflection and self-examination. The minister leads the congregation in the confession.

CONFESSION

Most holy and merciful Father:

We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own 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, Lord.

We have been deaf 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, Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypoc-
risy, and impatience in our lives,

we confess to you, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other
people,

we confess to you, Lord.

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate
than ourselves,

we confess to you, Lord.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishones-
ty in daily life and work,

we confess to you, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the
faith that is in us,

we confess to you, Lord.

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our
blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injus-
tice and cruelty,

accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neigh-
bors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from
us,

accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern
for those who come after us,

accept our repentance, Lord.

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen.

Please be seated.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those who wish to receive ashes are invited to come forward and kneel or stand at the communion rail. The minister applies ashes to the forehead of each person with the words: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. After all have received ashes and returned to their places, all may kneel or sit, and the minister continues.

Please stand as you are able.

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 Lord,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore we implore him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, and that at the least, we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

WORD

FIRST READING

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming Day of the LORD, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

¹ Blow 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—² a 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. ¹² Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. ¹⁴ 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? ¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶ gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the aged; gather

the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her canopy. ¹⁷ Between 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?' "

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6-10

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

^{20b}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. ¹As 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.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Spoken together

Return to the LORD, your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. (Joel 2:13)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 6th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

[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 dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; 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.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

SERMON

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY *“Lord Jesus, Think on Me”*

ELW 599

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

Eternal Father, you invite each of us to share in the life and ministry of your Son, Jesus Christ. Send your Holy Spirit to transform our faith family into a community of disciples. In this year of discipleship, teach us how to listen to Jesus, to love Jesus deeply, and to share Jesus with everyone we meet. Through the Holy Spirit, guide us to deepen our commitment as disciples of Jesus. Lead us, we pray, to grow as an intentional community, committed to our call to discipleship. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Almighty God, giver of all that is good, the beauty and dignity of human life was the crowning of your creation. Help us to respect and protect human life in all its stages, recognizing it as a gift from God. Give us the courage to speak with truth and love, and with conviction, in the protection of human life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Guide your church, O God. Accompany all Christians in this season of repentance, and renew our faith in the riches of grace you give to us in baptism. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Deliver your people, O God. Comfort any whose hearts are rent by grief, uphold any who are sick, bring food to those who hunger, and give housing to all without shelter. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Hold us forever, O God. We thank you for all who now know their treasure in heaven, and for (*Martin Luther and*) all who on earth proclaimed your abounding, steadfast love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please be seated.

OFFERTORY “Lamb of God, Your Only Son”

Senior Choir

The Ushers will collect the offering.

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

“Create in Me a Clean Heart”

ELW 186

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.

MEAL

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray together.

Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name.

Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and to prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to fullness of your grace. And so with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Read Together

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 come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup,

Gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all

People for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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;

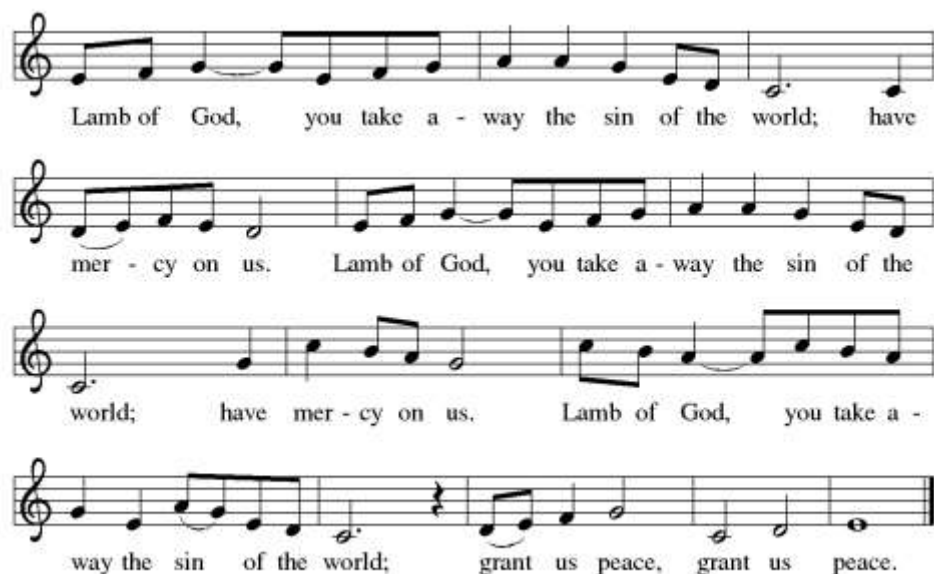
and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.



INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

Please be seated.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

All are welcome at the Lord's table. Please come forward by the center aisle at the usher's direction. If you choose to have wine for communion, take an empty cup from the usher. If you prefer grape juice, receive a pre-filled cup at the altar. If you or a child has never received the sacrament, fold hands to receive a blessing instead. After receiving communion or a blessing, you may choose to remain at the altar for extra time in prayer. When you return to your pew do so by the side aisles. Please deposit the empty cup in the basket.

COMMUNION HYMN "Come, Ye Disconsolate"

ELW 607

Please stand as you are able.

COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in eternal life.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together.

Generous God, at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, now make us one loaf to feed the world; in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, and renewed. God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and + give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN *"O Lord, throughout These Forty Days"* **ELW 319**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share your bread.

Thanks be to God.

Martin Luther, renewer of the church, died 1546

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Though he began his adult church life as a simple Augustinian monk, Luther challenged the abuses he saw in the church, and his work eventually led to the Protestant Reformation. Luther's accomplishments included liturgical reform, translation of the Bible, and creation of the Small and Large Catechisms.

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**Join us for our Midweek Lenten Services
each Wednesday in Lent at 7:00 pm
beginning Wednesday, February 25th.**

THEME: LENT: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

An encounter with the Lord is always a personal and transformative experience, leading to life-altering changes, including a new identity as a beloved child of God, deep inner healing (emotional, spiritual), and a transformed heart that brings forgiveness and peace with oneself and God. Reflecting on these encounters, we will discover our call as disciples of Jesus.

LENTEN MIDWEEK WEEKLY THEMES

- February 25:** First Wednesday of Lent:
Jesus and the Man Born Blind - John 9:1-12
- March 4:** Second Wednesday of Lent:
Jesus, Mary, and Martha - Luke 10:38-42
- March 11:** Third Wednesday of Lent:
Jesus and Nicodemus - John 3:1-21
- March 18:** Fourth Wednesday of Lent:
Jesus and the Woman at the Well - John 4:1-26
- March 25:** Fifth Wednesday of Lent:
Jesus and James and John - Matthew 20:20-28



Mary Kay Dagenhart

Doug & Pat Maun

Jeanne Naugle

Dorothy Railing

Trina Ruth

All Caregivers



Pastor

Pastor Godfred Effisah

Organist & Pianist

Nancy Fogelsanger

Senior Choir / Bell Choir

Director

Kathy Kerr

Parish Coordinator

Amy Piper



Check out our church website using this QR Code!