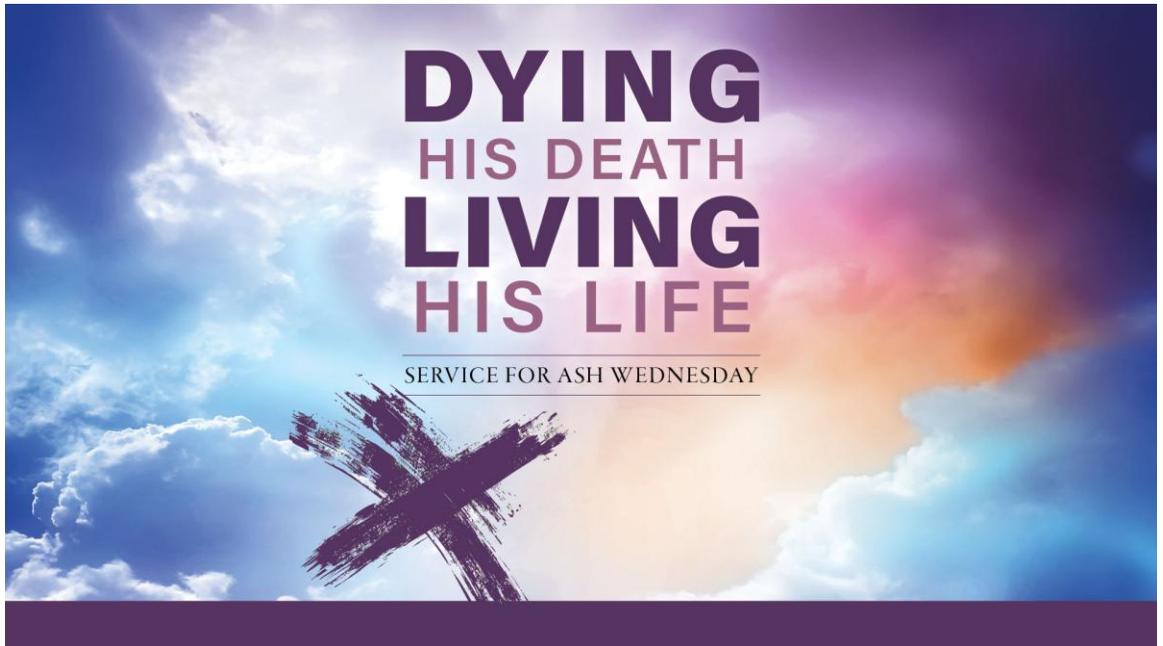


Ash Wednesday:

Dying to Sin, Living in Forgiveness



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

Psalm 51:1

**St. Peter Lutheran Church,
Hopewell Township NJ**

February 18, 2026

+ The Service of the Word +

Prelude

Confession and Absolution

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

David the psalmist writes, “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psalm 32:1). In humble repentance, we seek the blessing of God and forgiveness for our sins.

C: Almighty God, we confess that we have turned away from your Word and from your will for our lives. Instead of following your ways, we listen to the temptations of the world around us and seek to live according to our own sinful desires. We do not love others as we should. Have mercy on us, and forgive our sins for Jesus’ sake. Create in us new hearts and willing spirits to glorify you and serve others in your name.

P: The psalmist writes, “I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my sins to the Lord,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin” (Psalm 32:5). God has had mercy on us, sending his Son to suffer the penalty of death that we deserved for our sins and forgiving us for Jesus’ sake. 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: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!

Prayer of the Day

Imposition of Ashes

You are invited to come forward at the direction of the ushers to receive the mark of ashes.

Hymn 606 I Lay My Sins on Jesus

610 Lord Jesus, Think on Me

Old Testament Reading Psalm 51:1-12

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
 according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
 blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
 and cleanse me from my sin!
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
 and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
 and blameless in your judgment.
- ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
 and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- ⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
 and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
 wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
 let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
 and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
 and renew a right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
 and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
 and uphold me with a willing spirit.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Reading Colossians 1:13-20

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading Matthew 18:21-35

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 18th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³ “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him,

‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience

with me, and I will pay you.’³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.’³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

P: This the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon Hymn 609 Jesus Sinners Doth Receive (v 1-2)

Sermon

Hymn of Response 609 Jesus Sinners Doth Receive (v 3-4)

Prayers

P: Lord Jesus, by your death and resurrection, we were delivered from Satan’s domain of darkness and brought into your kingdom. In you we have forgiveness for our sins. Lord, create in each of us a clean heart.

C: Restore to us the joy of the salvation that we have through faith in your name.

P: Lord Jesus, forgive us when we keep count of the wrongs of others. Teach us to forgive others as we have been forgiven, knowing that because of your suffering and death, our sins have been removed forever from your sight. Lord, create in each of us a clean heart.

C: Restore to us the joy of the salvation that we have through faith in your name.

P: Lord Jesus, lead us to walk in love as you walked. Teach us to bear the burdens of others and to share with them the forgiveness that you show to us. As we encounter those who have gone astray from your Word and ways, lead us to reach out to them in love and kindness, reflecting your love and grace. Lord, create in each of us a clean heart.

C: Restore to us the joy of the salvation that we have through faith in your name.

P: Lord Jesus, bless those who are hurting and those who are suffering from illness, grief and sorrow. Help us to serve them in love, sharing with them the promises and comfort that are found in your holy Word. Lord, create in each of us a clean heart.

C: Restore to us the joy of the salvation that we have through faith in your name.

P: Lord Jesus, create in us hearts that are willing to serve, to love and to forgive, hearts that reflect the love and forgiveness that you have shown to us. Lord, create in each of us a clean heart.

**C: Restore to us the joy of the salvation that we have through faith in your name.
Amen.**

Gathering of the Offering and Offertory: page 187 Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful, Lord

C: Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.

**Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown
that we may be fed with the bread of life.**

Gather the hopes and dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer.

Grace our table with your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

+ The Service of the Sacrament +

Order of Holy Communion (page 177)

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary... evermore praising you and saying:

C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:

Heav'n 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.

Lord's Prayer

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

C: Our Father who art in heaven...

Words of Institution

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed...

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

(Please greet one another, saying: "The peace of the Lord be with you", responding "And also with you.")

C: Agnus Dei (page 180)

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

**Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace.**

Distribution Hymn 619 Thy Body, Given for Me, O Savior

Benediction (*Psalm 51:10-12; Numbers 6:24-26*)

P: 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.

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

P: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn 611 Chief of Sinners Though I Be (v 1-2)



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Lenten/Easter Schedule

Wednesdays, February 25 and March 4,11,18

Lenten Soup Suppers 6:30 pm

Midweek Lenten Services 7:30 pm

Sunday, March 29	Palm Sunday Service	9:30 am
Thursday, April 2	Maundy Thursday Service	7:30 pm
Friday, April 3	*Good Friday, at Bethany	Noon
Friday, April 3	Good Friday Service	7:30 pm
Saturday, April 4	Nursery School Egg Hunt	10:00 am

Sunday, April 5	Easter Sunday Services	8:00 AM & 10:30 AM
	Easter Breakfast	9:00 AM
	Easter Egg Hunt	10:00 AM

