

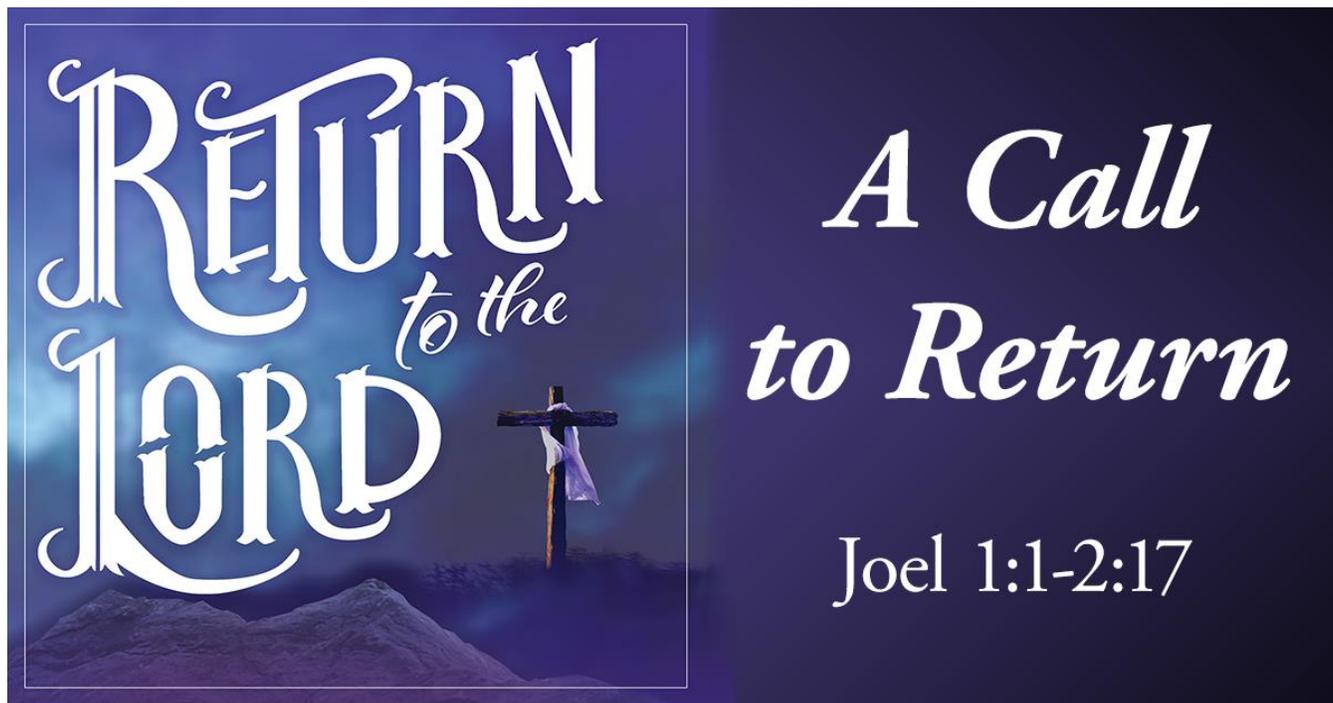


Return to the LORD, your God,
for He is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

+ *Joel 2:13b*

ASH WEDNESDAY: A CALL TO RETURN

February 17, 2021



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Through the words of the prophet Joel, God called to His people and commanded that they turn from their sinful ways and return to Him for His grace and blessings. The images the prophet uses are vivid and disturbing. The situation of God's people is desperate and needs immediate attention.

This is a time for listening and responding to the call to return to faithfulness to the God who has ever been faithful to His people. "Return to the Lord, your God" is more than a verse spoken as part of the liturgy. It is a heartfelt directive for our lives as together we follow the Lenten road that leads to Golgotha and the cross.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+Pastor Griebenaw

Pastor's phone: 760-679-3699

Pastor's email: pastor@gracelutheranelcentro.org

In keeping with the solemn character of the day, the congregation assembles in silence.

PREPARATION

Stand

ASH WEDNESDAY ADDRESS

- P** Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

Silence for reflection.

LITANY FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| P O Lord, | C have mercy. |
| P O Christ, | C have mercy. |
| P O Lord, | C have mercy. |
| P O Christ, | C hear us. |
| P God the Father in heaven, | C have mercy. |
| P God the Son, Redeemer of the world, | C have mercy. |
| P God the Holy Spirit, | C have mercy. |
| P Be gracious to us. | C Spare us, good Lord. |
| P Be gracious to us. | C Help us, good Lord. |
| P By the mystery of Your holy incarnation;
by Your holy nativity;
by Your baptism, fasting, and temptation;
by Your agony and bloody sweat;
by Your cross and passion;
by Your precious death and burial;
by Your glorious resurrection and ascension;
and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter: | |
| C Help us, good Lord. | |
| P In all time of our tribulation;
in all time of our prosperity;
in the hour of death;
and in the day of judgment: | |
| C Help us, good Lord. | |
| P We poor sinners implore You | |
| C to hear us, O Lord. | |
| P To prosper the preaching of Your Word;
to bless our prayer and meditation;
to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith;
and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance: | |
| C We implore You to hear us, good Lord. | |

P To draw all to Yourself;
to bless those who are instructed in the faith;
to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the lonely, the forsaken, the abandoned,
and all who stand in need of our prayers;
to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy;
and to have mercy on us all:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P To turn our hearts to You;
to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers;
and graciously to hear our prayers:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C **we implore You to hear us.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **grant us Your peace.**

P O Christ,

C **hear us.**

P O Lord,

C **have mercy.**

P O Christ,

C **have mercy.**

P O Lord,

C **have mercy. Amen.**

Sit

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

The congregation comes forward to receive ashes, a sign of penitence and reminder of our mortality. The pastor places ashes on the forehead in the sign of the cross, saying:

P Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return.

After receiving ashes, each person returns to his or her place in silence.

✠ DIVINE SERVICE, SETTING THREE ✠

Stand – The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

LSB 184

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]

C **Amen.**

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father,
beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

[Hebrews 10:22]

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

Psalms 124:8

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

Psalms 32:5

Kneel (or remain standing) — Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C **O most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

P Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Grant this, Lord, unto us all.

Mark 16:16; John 1:12

C **Amen.**

Stand

SERVICE OF THE WORD

INTROIT

Psalm 51:1–3, 10–12; antiphon: v. 17

The pastor and congregation speak responsively. The antiphon is spoken by the pastor before and after the psalm.

(Antiphon) The sacrifices of God are a broken | spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will | not despise.

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your | steadfast love; *
according to Your abundant mercy blot out my trans- | gressions.

² **Wash me thoroughly from my in- | iquity, *
and cleanse me | from my sin!**

³ For I know my trans- | gressions, *
and my sin is ever be- | fore me.

¹⁰ **Create in me a clean heart, | O God, *
and renew a right spirit with- | in 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 sal- | vation, *
and uphold me with a willing | spirit.**

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

The antiphon is repeated.

KYRIE

Mark 10:47

C **Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

The Gloria in Excelsis is omitted during Lent.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And with thy spirit.**

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Sit

OLD TESTAMENT

Joel 2:12–19

P The Old Testament Reading is from Joel, chapter two.

¹²“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD, your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and He relents over disaster. 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; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, “Spare Your people, O LORD, and make not Your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

¹⁸Then the LORD became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. ¹⁹The LORD answered and said to His people, “Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

GRADUAL

Hebrews 12:2

The pastor and congregation speak responsively by half-verse.

[O come, let us fix our eyes on] | Jesus,*

the founder and perfecter | of our faith,

Who for the joy that was set before Him endure the cross, despise- | ing the shame,*

and is seated at the right hand of the | throne of God.

EPISTLE

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

P The Epistle is from Second Corinthians, chapters five and six.

^{5:20}We implore 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.

¹Working together with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For He says, “In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

³We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE

Return to the LORD, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

P The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, chapter six.

C **Glory be to Thee, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] ¹“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ²Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when 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 when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

NICENE CREED

C **I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life † of the world to come. Amen.

Sit

HYMN OF THE DAY: From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee

LSB 607



1 From depths of woe I cry to Thee, In trial and
2 Thy love and grace a-lone a-vail To blot out
3 There-fore my hope is in the Lord And not in
4 And though it tar-ry through the night And till the
5 Though great our sins, yet great-er still Is God's a-



trib-u-la-tion; Bend down Thy gra-cious
my trans-gres-sion; The best and ho-liest
mine own mer-it; It rests up-on His
morn-ing wak-en, My heart shall nev-er
bun-dant fa-vor; His hand of mer-cy



ear to me, Lord, hear my sup-pli-ca-tion.
deeds must fail To break sin's dread op-pres-sion.
faith-ful Word To them of con-trite spir-it
doubt His might Nor count it-self for-sak-en.
nev-er will A-ban-don us, nor wa-ver.



If Thou re-mem-b'rest ev-'ry sin, Who then could heav-en
Be-fore Thee none can boast-ing stand, But all must fear Thy
That He is mer-ci-ful and just; This is my com-fort
O Is-rael, trust in God your Lord. Born of the Spir-it
Our shep-herd good and true is He, Who will at last His



ev-er win Or stand be-fore Thy pres-ence?
strict de-mand And live a-lone by mer-cy.
and my trust. His help I wait with pa-tience.
and the Word, Now wait for His ap-pear-ing.
Is-rael free From all their sin and sor-row.

Text and tune: Public Domain

SERMON

Rev. Griebenaw

After the sermon, the pastor may say:

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7

C Amen.

Stand

OFFERTORY

Psalm 51:10–12

- C** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.

Kneel (or remain standing)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(1 Timothy 2:1–4)

- P** Let us pray:
O Lord, our heavenly Father, You desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that we would turn from our evil ways and live. Turn us again, O God of our salvation, and let Your anger cease from us. Spare us from every evil to body and soul.

Look graciously on Your Church, and preserve the Gospel among us. Renew us in this penitential season to strive against the desires of the flesh, to grow in the joy of Your salvation, and to look in love and service toward our neighbors, especially those of the household of faith.

Look graciously on the families of our congregation. Defend Your holy estate of marriage against every enemy that would divide. Strengthen parents for their duties, especially bringing up their children in the fear and instruction of the Lord, and preserve us all faithful to the end.

Look graciously on our nation and its leaders, all civil servants, and those who protect us and work for the common good. Drive away all disease and fear from us, and grant peace.

Behold in mercy all who are sick, who suffer, and who rejoice; be with all expectant mothers, all whose labor is dangerous, the unemployed, those near death, and those who mourn. Give to us Your comfort, we who are dust and unto dust must return, that a broken and contrite heart You will not despise.

We thank You, heavenly Father, that You have sent Your only begotten Son into our flesh to offer Himself as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. Trusting in His mercy, bring us in repentance and faith to Your altar to eat His true body and drink His most precious blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

- C** Amen.

The live-stream service concludes with the following:

LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9–13

- P** Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold to pray:
C 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.

CONCLUDING COLLECT

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You willed that Your Son should bear for us the pains of the cross and so remove from us the power of the adversary. Help us so to remember and give thanks for our Lord's passion that we may receive forgiveness of sin and redemption from everlasting death; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Stand

BENEDICTION

Numbers 6:24–26

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

The Divine Service continues with the Lord's Supper for those at the church. There is no curbside communion tonight.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠
(TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY)