ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

"O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High"

+AS WE GATHER+

This Ash Wednesday, we introduce our Lent sermon series, which is based on the ancient hymn "O Love, How Deep" (*LSB* 544). This hymn, written in the fifteenth century, contemplates the love of God in becoming man, taking on our life, dying our death, and rising again, all *for us*. But for us to understand and appreciate this love, we must first examine ourselves and our lives to see how we have failed in thought, word, and deed. While we may try to get credit for our so-called good works, we all still die with nothing to show for them. But God's love is not like our love. Our love is self-centered and fickle. God's love is steady, deep, and beyond all understanding (Ephesians 3:14–19). This love of God will have no end.

Due to the solemn character of the day, preservice music and a hymn of invocation are omitted.

+ Preparation +

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.

OPENING SENTENCES - *Psalm 90*

P Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.

C **You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!" For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.**

P You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

C **For we are brought to an end by Your anger; by Your wrath we are dismayed. You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence.**

P For all our days pass away under Your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. Who considers the power of Your anger, and Your wrath according to the fear of You?

C **So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.**

P Return, O LORD! How long? Have pity on Your servants!

C **Satisfy us in the morning with Your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.**

P Make us glad for as many days as You have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil.

C **Let Your work be shown to Your servants, and Your glorious power to their children.**

P Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!

Silence for reflection

P O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the

promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

As the ashes are imposed on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, the pastor says, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

HYMN: #419 – *Savior When in Dust to Thee*

INVOCATION

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

C **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Joel 2:13*

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You 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; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and commissioned servant of Christ, and by His authority, I

therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

+ WORD +

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

COLLECT OF THE DAY

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.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Joel 2:12–19*

P The Old Testament Reading is from Joel, the second chapter.

12 "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to Me with all
your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 13
and 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. 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 elders; gather the
children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his
room, and the bride her chamber. 17 Between 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?'" 18 Then the LORD
became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. 19 The

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.**

PSALM - *Psalm 51:1–13*

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

EPISTLE *2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10*

P The Epistle is from Second Corinthians, the fifth and sixth chapters.

[20b]We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [21]For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

[1]Working together with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. [2]For 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. [3]We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, [4]but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, [5]beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; [6]by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; [7]by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; [8]through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; [9]as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; [10]as 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.**

GRADUAL *Hebrews 12:2*

[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 endured the cross, despising the shame,
and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[1] [Jesus said:] "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.
[2] "Thus, 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. [3] But when you
give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your
right hand is doing, [4] so 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. [6] But 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. [17]
But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, [18] that
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, [20] but lay up for
yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust
destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where
your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN:#544 vs. 1, 5&6 – O Love, How Deep

SERMON – O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High

APOSTLES' CREED

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,**
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life + everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH Psalm 51:12, 15

P Let us bring our requests to God, whose love knows no bounds.
For all who do not know our loving Lord, that He would bring the news of Christ to their ears, strengthen them in faith, and urge them to live in love, let us pray to the Lord.

C **O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise.**

P For the church, that God would open doors of opportunity for leaders and members to proclaim the Gospel, that schisms within it be mended, that the faithful be protected in body and soul, and that all people of faith find joy in their ministry, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Grant them, O God, to be strengthened with power through Your Spirit.**

P Where there is conflict and warfare between nations, that God would move leaders and citizens to seek peace with their neighbors and calm within their borders, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Dwell in their hearts, O Christ, through faith.**

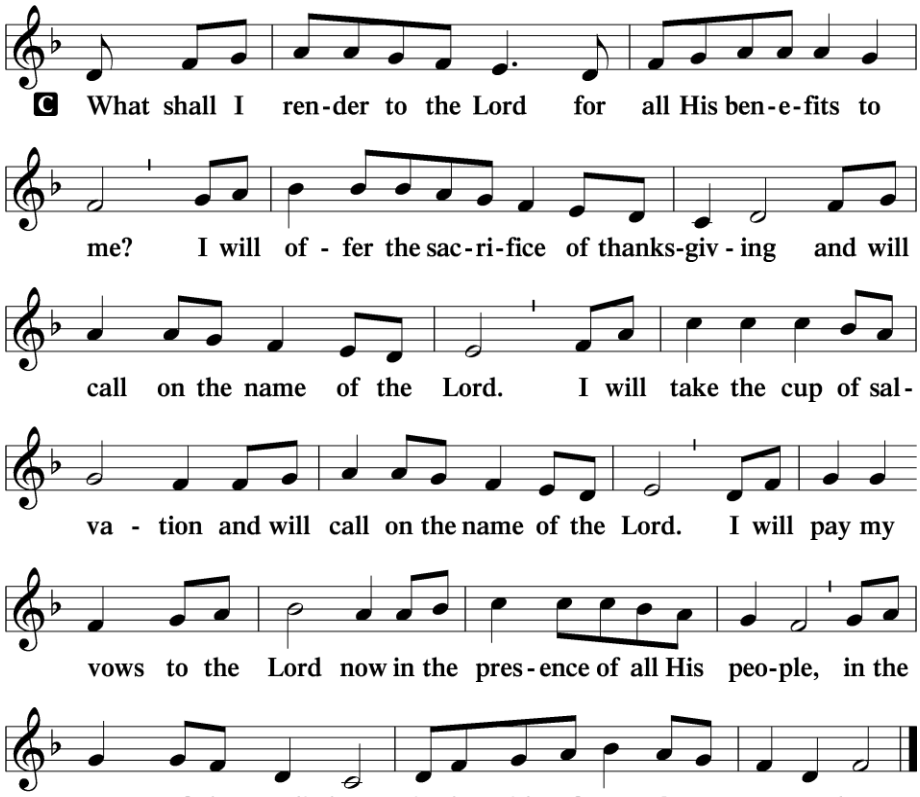
P Where the old and young are forgotten, the sick and grieving ignored, and the needs of any are not met, that God would prosper the work of farmers and ranchers, relief agencies and civic leaders to provide for their needs, [*and especially . . .*], let us pray to the Lord.

C **Grant that all caregivers reflect God's love and be gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

P For each of us, that our service to God, our concern for one another, and the mission He puts before us be joyful endeavors we seek for the growth of the church and glory of God, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Amen.**

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *LSB 159*

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

CLOSING COLLECT

P Let us pray.
The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. We give thanks to You, O God, that by Your hand this day You have satisfied our deepest desire, the renewal of our hearts and spirits by the forgiveness of our sins and the promise of everlasting life. Help us to have generous and thankful hearts and hands to share Your mercy and grace as we forgive our neighbors as we ourselves have been forgiven by You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

C **Amen.**

HYMN – 418 – O Lord, throughout These Forty Days