

# St Peter Lutheran Church

## Order of Worship

*Ash Wednesday: Mercy in Ashes*

*February 18, 2026*

### Welcome

*Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Joel 2:13*

*(Please stand, as you are able)*

### Invocation and Call to Worship

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C Amen.**

**P** Return to the Lord your God.

**C Christ crucified, I come.**

**P** Behold his miracle of mercy.

**C Christ crucified, I come.**

**P** Receive his gift of grace.

**C Christ crucified, I come.**

**P** Abide in his steadfast love.

**C Christ crucified, I come.**

**P** Rest in his unfailing faithfulness.

**C Christ crucified, I come.**

### LSB 560 Drawn to the Cross, Which Thou Hast Blessed

1 Drawn to the cross, which Thou hast  
blessed  
With healing gifts for souls distressed,  
To find in Thee my life, my rest,  
Christ crucified, I come.

2 Thou knowest all my griefs and fears,  
Thy grace abused, my misspent years;  
Yet now to Thee with contrite tears,  
Christ crucified, I come.

3 Wash me and take away each stain;  
Let nothing of my sin remain.  
For cleansing, though it be through pain,  
Christ crucified, I come.

4 And then for work to do for Thee,  
Which shall so sweet a service be  
That angels well might envy me,  
Christ crucified, I come.

Text: Public domain

## Confession and Absolution

**P** “Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments” (Joel 2:12-13). As our Lord summons us to return to him with repentant hearts, we confess our sins and sorrow over them.

**C** **Almighty God, we are unclean before you. We are marred and marked by the filth of sin. We have turned away from you by disobeying your commandments. We have rebelled against you by seeking our own way rather than following your will. Forgive us.**

**P** We cry out to you for mercy!

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

*(Please silently reflect on the fact that though our sin is great, God’s mercy is greater.)*

**P** Hear the good news! God’s Word declares that “he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” (Joel 2:13). In the mercy of Almighty God, his Son Jesus was given to die for you to remove the stain of your sin. For Christ’s sake God forgives you all your sin and renews a right spirit within you. His mercy endures forever because his love for you is steadfast.

**C** **Amen.**

*The **Imposition of Ashes** takes place at this time. The assembly may come forward to receive the imposition of ashes. Ashes are placed on the forehead in the shape of the cross, as the following words are spoken: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” After the imposition is completed, the assembly may be seated for the Prayer of the Day.*

## Prayer of the Day

**P** Almighty and everlasting God, as we begin our Lenten pilgrimage, we do so in a spirit of repentance. We are sinful and depend completely upon your mercy. Strengthen us by your Holy Spirit so that we might follow you in paths of righteousness. We pray through Jesus Christ, your

Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**  
*(Please be seated)*

### **Old Testament Reading, Joel 2:12-18**

"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 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. 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? Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; 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. 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?'" Then the Lord became jealous for his land and had pity on his people.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord   **G** **Thanks be to God**

### **Epistle Reading, 1 John 1:8-9**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord   **G** **Thanks be to God**

*(Please stand as you are able)*

### **The Holy Gospel, Matthew 6:16-18**

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. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 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.

**L** This is the Gospel of the Lord   **G** **Praise to You, O Christ!**

*(Please be seated)*

### **Sermon Song, LSB 915 Today Your Mercy Calls Us**

1    Today Your mercy calls us To wash away our sin.  
However great our trespass, Whatever we have been,  
However long from mercy Our hearts have turned away,  
Your precious blood can wash us And make us clean today.

2 Today Your gate is open,  
And all who enter in  
Shall find a Father's welcome  
And pardon for their sin.  
The past shall be forgotten,  
A present joy be giv'n,  
A future grace be promised,  
A glorious crown in heav'n.

3 Today our Father calls us;  
His Holy Spirit waits;  
His blessed angels gather  
Around the heav'nly gates.  
No question will be asked us  
How often we have come;  
Although we oft have wandered,  
It is our Father's home.

4 O all-embracing Mercy, O ever-open Door,  
What should we do without You When heart and eye run o'er?  
When all things seem against us, To drive us to despair,  
We know one gate is open, One ear will hear our prayer.

Text: Public domain

## Sermon

## Offering

### Prayers of the Church

**P** Almighty and merciful God, we approach your throne of grace today as sinners who require your cleansing.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

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

**C Lord, have mercy.**

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

**C Lord, have mercy.**

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

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**P** Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

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

**C Lord, have mercy.**

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

**C Lord, have mercy.**

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

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**P** Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

**C Lord, grant me your grace both to will and to do what pleases you.**

**P** All these things we pray in the name of Jesus, who cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

**C Amen.**

## Lord's Prayer

**P** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us 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.**

## Benediction

**P** May the merciful God, who is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, empower you to live according to his good and gracious will, through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory forever.

**C Amen.**

## Closing Song, LSB 704 Renew Me, O Eternal Light

1 Renew me, O eternal Light,  
And let my heart and soul be bright,  
Illumined with the light of grace  
That issues from Your holy face.

2 Remove the pow'r of sin from me  
And cleanse all my impurity  
That I may have the strength and will  
Temptations of the flesh to still.

3 Create in me a new heart, Lord,  
That gladly I obey Your Word.  
Let what You will be my desire,  
And with new life my soul inspire.

4 Grant that I only You may love  
And seek those things which are above  
Till I behold You face to face,  
O Light eternal, through Your grace.

Text: Public domain

By David Peter. © 2022 Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc., 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. 800-325-9414. [www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com). All rights reserved.