**BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Rev. Molly Wills, Pastor | Jan Smith, Accompanist

Ash Wednesday | Wednesday, March 5, 2025

ELW Holy Communion Setting 10

SPIRIT ART

A meditative study of scripture through art.

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21



GATHERING

Meditation time How Deep the Father's Love For Us arr. by Lyndell Leatherman and Mark Hayes/ Marvin Gaspard

**GATHERING HYMN** *Now Is the Time of Grace* (purple hymnal #918)

Greeting  The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

**Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors.  Call forth from within us prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

WORD

FIRST Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

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?’ ” The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 51:1-17

1 Have 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.**
3 For 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.**
5 Indeed, 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.**
7 Remove 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.**
9 Hide 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.**
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 sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**
13 Let 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.**
15 O 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.**
17 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

20b We entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 6:1 As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2 For he says, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.” Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! 3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true, 9 as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed, 10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation (red ELW p. 205)

**We are turning, Lord, to hear you; you are merciful and kind—slow to anger, rich in blessing, and with love to us inclined.**

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 1 “Beware of practicing your righteousness 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. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so 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. 6 But 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 somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so 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 treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON**

Hymn of the Day *Savior, When in Dust to You* (red hymnal #601)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.** Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God’s abiding love. Compassionate One, **you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross. Amen.**

Beloved in Christ, God’s arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In + Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God’s house forever. **Amen.**

**INVITATION TO LENT**

**IMPOSITION OF ASHES** Just As I Am, Without One Plea *(*red hymnal #592)

Remember That You Are Dust (purple hymnal #919) (Repeat)

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 Savior,

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

Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ.  Strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

Prayers of intercession God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Peace The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

offering *All Thanks to You* by Hans Peterson

OfferING Prayer

**Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

LORD’S PRAYER (red ELW p. 208)

SENDING

Blessing

Sending HYMN *Once We Sang and Danced* (red hymnal #701)

Dismissal Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you. **Thanks be to God.** Postlude Around You, O Lord Jesus setting by Stephen Gabrielson From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.