

SAVIOR
SERVANT
FRIEND



Ash Wednesday
FORGIVER

Ash Wednesday

March 5th, 2025

Christ Lutheran Church

2751 N. Scatterfield Road
Anderson, IN 46012

Email: ChristLutheranChurchAnderson@gmail.com

Website: www.ChristLutheranAnderson.com

Facebook: *Christ Lutheran Church Anderson*

Office Hours: 10:30 am—3:30 pm M—F

Office Phone Number: (765) 642-2154

ASH WEDNESDAY

Savior, Servant, Friend—Forgiver

March 5, 2025

AS WE GATHER

In this service for Ash Wednesday, we begin the season of Lent contemplating that Jesus is our Forgiver. We will remind ourselves that Jesus forgives us again and again by His cross, even though we do not deserve it.

“I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” ~ John 15:15

INVOCATION AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: We gather together as friends in the presence of the Triune God who has called us friends. We gather together in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Pastor: A friend loves at all times,

All: And a brother is born for adversity. (Proverbs 17:17)

Pastor: The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him,

All: And He makes known to them His covenant. (Psalm 25:14)

Pastor: A man of many companions may come to ruin,

All: But there is a Friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)

Pastor: What a Friend we have in Jesus,

All: All our sins and griefs to bear!

Pastor: Precious Savior, still our refuge—

All: Take it to the Lord in prayer.

OPENING HYMN

“Chief of Sinners though I Be”

LSB 611

Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed His blood for me,
Died that I might live on high, lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.

Oh, the height of Jesus’ love, higher than the heav’ns above,
Deeper than the depths of sea, lasting as eternity!
Love that found me—wondrous thought! Found me when I sought Him not.

Only Jesus can impart balm to heal the wounded heart,
Peace that flows from sin forgiv’n, joy that lifts the soul to heav’n,
Faith and hope to walk with God in the way that Enoch trod.

Chief of sinners though I be, Christ is all in all to me;
All my wants to Him are known, all my sorrows are His own.
He sustains the hidden life safe with Him from earthly strife.

**O my Savior, help afford by Your Spirit and Your Word!
When my wayward heart would stray, keep me in the narrow way;
Grace in time of need supply while I live and when I die.**

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Musical Meditation

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Jesus, Friend of sinners, hear me as I confess my sins.

All: My thoughts have befriended sin and shame, not truth and righteousness.

Pastor: O Lord, You have searched me and known me! (*Psalm 139:1*)

All: My words have befriended lies and slander, not love and mercy.

Pastor: Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. (*Psalm 139:4*)

All: My deeds have befriended hate and hurt, not peace and kindness.

Pastor: You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. (*Psalm 139:3*)

All: Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy!

(Please silently reflect on the ways that you have befriended sin—and yet Jesus still calls you a friend.)

Pastor: Friends in Jesus: You have a Savior who has lived for you, died for you, and left the tomb empty for you. Your Servant, Jesus, has humbled Himself to care for you. Your Friend, Christ Jesus, has cleansed you from all unrighteousness and washed away your sin. Jesus forgives you and loves you. Jesus is your Friend now and for all eternity.

All: What a Friend we have in Jesus.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

† **GOD'S WORD** †

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Joel 2:12-17

(ESV page 904)

¹²“Even now,” declares the LORD,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

¹³Rend your heart
and not your garments.
Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.

¹⁴Who knows? He may turn and relent
and leave behind a blessing—

grain offerings and drink offerings
for the LORD your God.

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion,
declare a holy fast,
call a sacred assembly.

¹⁶ Gather the people,
consecrate the assembly;
bring together the elders,
gather the children,
those nursing at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her chamber.

¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister before the LORD,
weep between the portico and the altar.
Let them say, "Spare your people, LORD.
Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn,
a byword among the nations.
Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE READING

Colossians 1:9-14

(ESV page 1168)

⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 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.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 7:36-49

(ESV page 1027)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 7th chapter.

All: Glory to You, O Lord.

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. ³⁷ And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, ³⁸ and standing behind him at his feet,

weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.” ⁴⁰ And Jesus answering said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he answered, “Say it, Teacher.”

⁴¹ “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” ⁴³ Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.” ⁴⁴ Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” ⁴⁸ And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” ⁴⁹ Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

PREPARATORY SONG

“How Can We Forgive”

[Vocal Solo]

*How can we forgive when bonds of love are torn?
How can we rise anew, our trust reborn?
When human loving fails and ev'ry hope is gone,
Your love gives strength beyond our own to face the dawn.
When we have missed the mark and tears of anguish flow,
How can You still release our guilt, the debt we owe?
The ocean depth of grace surpasses all our needs.
A Priest who shares our human pain, Christ intercedes.
Who dares to throw a stone to damn another's sin,
When You, while knowing all our past, forgive again?
No more we play the judge for by Your grace we live.
As You, O God, forgive our sin, may we forgive.*

SERMON

“Forgiver”

Luke 7:36-49

OFFERING *(You are invited to place your financial gifts to the Lord in the offering plates as they are passed through the pews. You can also give your one-time or recurring gifts to the Lord through the "Vanco Mobile" app for your phone or by clicking on the "Give" tab on our website.)*

OFFERTORY

“Just As I Am, without One Plea” (vs. 1-3, 5)

LSB 570

**Just as I am, without one plea but that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

**Just as I am and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

**Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

**Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

PRAYERS

Each petition concludes with the following response:

Pastor: Lord,

All: Hear our prayer.

Pastor: Jesus, deliver us from isolation, and give us a seat at Your table where we receive Your body and blood.

All: Jesus, what a privilege it is to be Your friend. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Hear us as we pray in Jesus' name and as He has taught us:

All: 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.

† CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER †

Through the Lord's Supper, our God graciously gives us the very body and blood of Jesus with the bread and wine for the forgiveness of our sins and the strengthening of our faith in Him. To honor Jesus' presence among us, we ask that those communing have the following fellowship ties with us:

- Each one has been baptized in the name of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
- Each one has been instructed in and agrees with the Biblical teachings regarding the Lord's Supper as confessed by this congregation;
- Each one can answer "Yes" to the following questions in preparation to receive the Lord's Supper:
 - ◇ *Am I a sinner?*
 - ◇ *Am I sorry for my sin?*
 - ◇ *Do I believe Jesus died on a cross and rose from the dead to forgive me of my sin?*

◇ *Do I believe Jesus is really present with the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper to deliver His forgiveness to me?*

◇ *In response to God's forgiveness, do I intend to live a God-pleasing life?*

If you are unsure about whether or not it would be beneficial for you to participate, please feel free to contact Pastor John at your convenience during this coming week (pastorjohn.christlutheran@gmail.com or 765-623-1137). *(Please note that gluten-free wafers and white grape juice are available for those who would prefer them.)*

WORDS OF OUR LORD

SHARING OF GOD'S PEACE

Pastor: The peace of the † Lord be with you always.

People: Amen. *(The congregation may be seated.)*

RECEPTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

“How Deep the Father's Love For Us”

**How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss. The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One bring many sons to glory.**

**Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders.
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished.**

**I will not boast in anything: no gifts, no pow'r, no wisdom.
But I will boast in Jesus Christ: His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer.
But this I know with all my heart: His wounds have paid my ransom.
His wounds have paid my ransom.**

PRAYER OF THANKS

BENEDICTION

Pastor: Jesus has called you friends and made known to you all that He has heard from the Father. Go now as friends of Jesus befriending others in the name of Jesus. Amen.

All: What a Friend we have in Jesus!

**What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit; oh, what needless pain we bear—
All because we do not carry ev'rything to God in prayer!**

**Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness—take it to the Lord in prayer.**

**Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge—take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In His arms He'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a solace there.**

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Rev. John A. Jameson
Senior Pastor
765-623-1137
PastorJohn.ChristLutheran@
gmail.com

Stephen M. Fleck
Music Director
765-557-1025
StephenFleck.ChristLutheran@
gmail.com