



ASH WEDNESDAY

PEACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Houghton, Michigan
Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Welcome to Worship

God's grace welcomes you, and so do we — the pastor and members of Peace! Jesus Christ is the only Savior of all people. By his perfect life, innocent death and triumphant resurrection, Jesus saves all sinners. We learn these truths from the Bible — God's complete plan for our salvation and his guidebook for our lives. Peace greets you with a warm welcome. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

Series Explanation: Exactly What I Need

"I didn't know I needed that" is a common expression of surprise and realization. It suggests that something, whether it's a piece of information, a lesson learned, or a newfound understanding, has come to light and is now recognized as being essential or valuable, even if it wasn't previously apparent.

Lent is the season of the Church Year when I recognize my greatest needs. During Lent, I realize that in Christ all my greatest needs are met. God knows what I need even when I don't have any idea. The Holy Spirit makes it clear, week after week, that if I lack Christ, I have nothing. But if I have Christ, I have exactly what I need.

Worship Series Schedule: Open Door Policies

Ash Wednesday: Forgiveness

February 22: A Champion

March 1: Faith

March 8: Water

March 15: Sight

March 22: Life



Today's Focus: Forgiveness

I recognize my sinfulness. I am aware of my guilt, and the more I look at my situation, the more I realize what deep trouble I am in. I realize that what I really need is forgiveness, but I don't deserve it. Fully aware of these facts, God worked salvation for me, provided me a Savior, called me to repentance, and promises me forgiveness.

ABOUT ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, reminding us of our mortality and calling us to repent. The ancient practice of imposing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful is what gives Ash Wednesday its name. The church father Tertullian (c. A.D. 160-215) writes of the practice as a public expression of repentance and of our human frailty that stands in need of Christ. Ashes can remind us forcefully of our need for redeeming grace as they recall words from the rite of Christian burial—"earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust..."—words that will someday be spoken over us all.

The imposition of Ashes

The imposition of Ashes is an ancient Christian tradition meant to remind us of our frailty and need for forgiveness. Without Christ, we are nothing but dust. We will be observing this ancient tradition today. It is not expected that everyone participates in this ritual. However, those who wish to participate can certainly do so.

Order of Service

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.

Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my
Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous, in burnt offerings
offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Hymn

Lord, to You I Make Confession

- 1 Lord, to you I make confession:
I have sinned and gone astray;
I have multiplied transgression,
chosen for myself my way.
Led by you to see my errors,
Lord, I tremble at your terrors.
- 2 Yet, though conscience' voice appall me,
Father, I will seek your face.
Though your child I dare not call me,
yet receive me to your grace.
Do not for my sins forsake me,
do not let your wrath o'ertake me.
- 3 For your Son has suffered for me,
giv'n himself to rescue me,
died to save me and restore me,
reconciled and set me free.
Jesus' cross alone can vanquish
these dark fears and soothe this anguish.
- 4 Lord, on you I cast my burden—
sink it in the deepest sea!
Let me know your gracious pardon,
cleanse me from iniquity.
Let your Spirit leave me never,
make me only yours forever.

Text: tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; Johann Franck, 1618–1677, abr.
Text: Public domain

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and merciful God, you never despise what you have made and always forgive those who turn to you. Create in us such new and contrite hearts that we may truly repent of our sins and obtain your full and gracious pardon; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Please be Seated.

Reading

2 Corinthians 7:8–13a

⁸Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—⁹yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹²So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. ¹³By all this we are encouraged.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Hymn of the Day

From Depths of Woe, Lord God, I Cry

1 From depths of woe, Lord God, I cry; O hear my
 2 What we have done on our best day is flawed from
 3 Thus an - y mer - it of my own is void and
 4 If it de - lays in - to the night or waits un -
 5 Al - though our sin is great in - deed, the grace of

hum - ble plead - ing! Lis - ten in mer - cy to my sigh,
 its be - gin - ning; on - ly your grace can clear a - way
 un - a - vail - ing; I trust in God and God a - lone,
 til to - mor - row, my heart will lean on God's great might,
 God is great - er; no loss we suf - fer can ex - ceed

my prayer for res - cue heed - ing! Were you, O
 the guilt of all our sin - ning. Be - fore you
 he is my hope un - fail - ing. Since he is
 dis - card - ing doubt and sor - row. The Spir - it
 the help of our Cre - a - tor. Our shep - herd

Lord, to fix your gaze on our re - bel - lious,
 pride must dis - ap - pear; each soul must live in
 good, I soon will see the com - fort he has
 of the Lord is near, pro - vid - ing strength to
 good and true is he, who will at last his

sin - ful ways, then who could stand be - fore you?
 rev - 'rent fear, up - on your grace re - ly - ing.
 prom - ised me; I wait for its ar - ri - val.
 per - se - vere; de - pend on God to help you!
 peo - ple free from all their sin and sor - row.

Gospel

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

¹“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 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. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

¹⁶“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to you, O Christ!

Sermon

Please stand.

Hymn

Today Your Mercy Calls Us



1 To - day your mer - cy calls us to wash a - way our sin.
2 To - day your gate is o - pen, and all who en - ter in
3 To - day our Fa - ther calls us, his Ho - ly Spir - it waits;
4 O all - em - brac - ing Mer - cy, O ev - er - o - pen Door,



How - ev - er great our tres - pass, what - ev - er we have been,
shall find a Fa - ther's wel - come and par - don for their sin.
his bless - ed an - gels gath - er a - round the heav'n - ly gates.
what should we do with - out you when heart and eye run o'er?



how - ev - er long from mer - cy our hearts have turned a - way,
The past shall be for - got - ten, a pres - ent joy be giv'n,
No ques - tion will be asked us how of - ten we have come;
When all things seem a - gainst us, to drive us to de - spair,



your pre - cious blood can wash us and make us clean to - day.
a fu - ture grace be prom - ised, a glo - rious crown in heav'n.
al - though we oft have wan - dered, it is our Fa - ther's home.
we know one gate is o - pen, one ear will hear our prayer.

Text: Oswald Allen, 1816-1878, alt.

Tune: Friedrich K. Anthes, 1812-after 1857

Text and tune: Public domain

Please be seated.

Confession and Imposition of Ashes

Brothers and sisters in Christ, God created us to know joy in fellowship with him, to love all people, and to live in harmony with all creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. By our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn to him and live. Therefore, God in his mercy has sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take our place under the law, to suffer for us, and to die the death we deserve. God made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.

During the forty days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

Let us confess our sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit ourselves to this struggle.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Confession

In the midst of earthly life
snares of death surround us;
who shall help us in the strife
lest the foe confound us?
You only, Lord, you only!

We mourn that we have greatly erred,
that our sins your wrath have stirred.

Holy and righteous God! Holy and mighty God!
Holy and all-merciful Savior! Eternal Lord God!
Save us lest we perish in the bitter pangs of death.
Have mercy, O Lord!

In the midst of death's dark vale
powers of hell o'er take us;
who will help when they assail,
who secure will make us?
You only, Lord, you only!

Your heart is moved with tenderness,
pities us in our distress.

Holy and righteous God! Holy and mighty God!
Holy and all-merciful Savior! Eternal Lord God!
Save us from the terror of the fiery pit of hell.
Have mercy, O Lord!

In the midst of utter woe
when our sins oppress us,
where shall we for refuge go,
where for grace to bless us?
To you, Lord Jesus, only!

Your precious blood was shed to win
full atonement for our sin.

Holy and righteous God! Holy and mighty God!
Holy and all-merciful Savior! Eternal Lord God!
Lord, preserve and keep us in the peace that faith can give.
Have mercy, O Lord!

Imposition of Ashes

Those who desire to receive the sign of ashes come forward. The minister sprinkles ashes on the head or right wrist of each person in the form of a cross, saying:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

After all have received ashes, the pastor says:

**Accomplish in us, Lord, the work of your salvation
that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

**By the cross and suffering of your Son,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. He sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn

God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It sts. 2-3



2 Sin, dis - turb my soul no long - er: I am bap - tized
3 Sa - tan, hear this proc - la - ma - tion: I am bap - tized

in - to Christ! I have com - fort e - ven strong - er: Je - sus'
in - to Christ! Drop your ug - ly ac - cu - sa - tion, I am

cleans-ing sac - ri - fice. Should a guilt - y con - science seize me
not so soon en - ticed. Now that to the font I've trav - eled,

since my bap - tism did re - lease me in a dear for -
all your might has come un - rav - eled, and, a - gainst your

giv - ing flood, sprink - ling me with Je - sus' blood?
tyr - an - ny, God, my Lord, u - nites with me!

Text: Erdmann Neumeister, 1671-1756; tr. Robert E. Voelker, b. 1957

Tune: Johann Caspar Bachofen, 1695-1755, alt.

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Tune: Public domain

There will be no post-service announcements or greetings. The congregation may exit on their own after a few moments.

Announcements

Foundations of Faith

Foundations is for everyone: people interested in becoming members, those looking to build their faith, or the curious observer who wants to study the Bible without feeling obligated to join a church. This study is Bible-based and discussion-centered. Classes can be arranged to fit personal schedules.

To get plugged in or to request more information, contact Pastor Welch (pastor@peacehoughton.org). Childcare is available upon request.

Online Offering Option

If you would like to give an online offering today, please scan the QR code. All online donations are safe and go directly to Peace.



Upcoming Events

There is a full schedule of events for both members and students alike. You can find the full schedule on the tables in the fellowship hall, on the app or website, or by scanning the QR code.



Shifting from Wednesday Dinner and Bible Study to Wednesday Lenten Dinners and Services

For most of the year, our church provides meals for students on Wednesdays prior to a Bible study. **During the season of Lent, the students will not be meeting for Bible study.** However, there will still be a meal on Wednesday. If you are interested in helping to serve or provide a meal, please sign up on the sheet in the entryway. More than one person can sign up for a meal. Please reach out to Pastor Welch if you have any questions.



PEACE

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Our mission is to spread the gospel of Christ, to gather college students and the local community into a family of believers, and to share the message of hope and the promise of salvation through grace.