

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
"People of Christ Making a Difference"
119 N Church Street
Lexington, SC

Ash Wednesday
February 17, 2021

WELCOME TO OUR VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICE!

During this time of social distancing here are a few things to remember:

We are back to regular office hours Monday through Friday. Please don't hesitate to let us know how we can help! The pastors are available by calling the church (359-6562), calling the Crisis Care Line after hours (808-6471), or emailing them (pat@ssl.org and/or jasonantley@earthlink.net)

If you visit our website (www.ssl.org) you will see additions to the main page. On your phone, please make sure you are on the full website (just scroll down and click the icon that says full website). At the top you will see SIX RED BOXES. Here are the details:

Box 1) **"Weekly Bulletins"** – which will correspond to the services on YouTube.

Box 2) **"Virtual Communion"** – explanation and instructions for communing at home during virtual worship.

Box 3) **"Click Here For Our YouTube"** – where you can click to participate in our virtual worship services, or you can copy and paste tinyurl.com/SSLCWorship into your browser to take you there directly. Services will be livestreamed at 12:30 PM on Wednesdays and 8:30 AM on Sundays.

Box 4) **"Latest Church Update"** – where we will post the latest COVID-19 church update.

Box 5) **"Online Giving"** – Don't forget to support our ministry during this time apart by either mailing your donations to the church (119 N Church Street, Lexington, SC 29072), giving online, or giving through the Givelify app. This may also be a time to consider direct deposit giving. For more details please call the church office to contact our Parish Administrator, Mrs. Tonya Reynolds.

Box 6) **"Green Sheet Announcements"** – this is the green bulletin insert you would normally get on Sunday.

If you need any sort of assistance (ie needing food, getting groceries or prescriptions, going to medical appointments, anything at all), please call the church office or one of the pastors. We have folks who are willing to help in any way they can! Please take time to call folks who may not have a strong network and may be in need. Neighbors helping neighbors is one way we can be "People of Christ Making a Difference!"

We will continue sending out emails but you can also check out our website and our Facebook page for updates. God bless you! We love you! Stay safe out there!

PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL

Psalm 51

(Read in Unison)

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.
- ⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- ⁶ You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.
- ¹⁵ O LORD, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- ¹⁶ For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.
- ¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
- ¹⁸ Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,
- ¹⁹ then you will delight in right sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.\

GREETING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together.

Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may obtain from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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 our clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. 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; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶ gather the people. Sanctify 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.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat 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. ^{6:1} As we work together with him, we urge 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.' See, now is the acceptable time; see, 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: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ by 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 see—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.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Amen.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 6th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Beware of practicing your piety 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 dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as 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

“For a Changing of the Heart”

Pastor Jason

EXHORTATION

Brothers and sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with Him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all His creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under His judgment, but to turn to Him and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love - the discipline of Lent - help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you to commit yourselves to this struggle and confess your sins, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination.)

CONFESSION

Most Holy and merciful Father:

We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of Saints in heaven and earth, that we have sinned by our own fault 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, and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven,
have mercy on us, Lord.

We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit,
have mercy on us, Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,
we confess to you, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,
we confess to you, Lord.

Our anger at our own frustration, and envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,
we confess to you, Lord.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,
we confess to you, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,
we confess to you, Lord.

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,
accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,
accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us;
accept our repentance, Lord.

Restore us, Lord, for your mercy is great. 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 Lord,
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 they turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore, we implore him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do this day, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OFFERING

It is during times like these that we notice an even greater purpose for our ministry and life together in Christ as we love and support each other and the world around us. Don't forget to support our ministry by mailing your offering to the church, giving online (www.sslc.org) or through the Givelify app. This may also be a time to consider direct deposit giving. For more details please contact our Parish Administrator, Mrs. Tonya Reynolds, at (803) 359-6562.

ANTHEM

"Have Mercy on Us (For What We Have Done)"

Keyes, Really, Boswell, and Papa

CCLI Song # 7136067, License # 2440064

For what we have done and left undone, we fall on Your countless mercies.
For sins that are known and those unknown, we call on Your name so holy.
For envy and pride, for closing our eyes, for scorning our very neighbor;
In thought word and deed we've failed You our King. How deeply we need a Savior.

Refrain: Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy on us. (Repeated)

For what you have done, Your life of love You perfectly lived, we praise You.
Though tempted and tried You fixed Your eyes. You finished the work God gave You.
And there on the tree, a King among thieves, You bled for a world's betrayal.
You loved to the end, our merciful friend, how pure and forever faithful. *Refrain*

For hearts that are cold for seizing control, for scorning our very Maker.
In thought word and deed we've failed You our King. How deeply we need a Savior *Refrain*

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together.

Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

RECEPTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Christ welcomes you to this Holy Meal of the Baptized! This Holy Sacrament is a fundamental part of how we participate in worship and receive Christ's body and blood, given and shed for us for the forgiveness of our sins. It is customary to use bread and wine for this meal, however with the given circumstances we invite you to find whatever is most appropriate in your context for your family to share. As you gather together to receive the real presence of Christ found in, with, and under the elements, be assured that the gifts we are given by God in the Holy Sacrament transcend space and time. May we be fed and nourished by God through this meal so that we may persevere and continue in discipleship this and every day.

(As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ shed for you.

The communicant may say: "Amen.")

BLESSING OF THE COMMUNICANTS

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray, God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

May God restore in you the joy of salvation, strengthen your love for your neighbor, and grant you to live in harmony with all creation; and the blessing of almighty God, Father, + Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.
Thanks be to God.

ABOUT THE SERVICE

The mood of this service is one of penitence and reflection upon the quality of one's faith and life. In observance of this penitential discipline we use an ancient "Ash Wednesday Liturgy" in place of our usual confession.

The ancient practice of placing ashes on the forehead is a symbolic act rich in meaning. Ashes represent death, God's condemnation of sin. They also represent cleansing and renewal, since in ancient times a mixture of ash and water served as a substitute for soap. The ashes are traced on the forehead in the sign of the cross as a remembrance of baptism, when water is used in the same manner.

The pastor's words as he administers the ashes, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return," recall the Genesis creation story in which God fashioned humanity from the dust of the earth. In recognition of our dependence on God for life, receiving the ashes is an act of humility and repentance.

The Church Staff

Crisis Care Line: 808-6471

Website: www.sslc.org

The Rev. Dr. Patrick W. Riddle

Mrs. Shannon Burnett, Director of Family Life

Mr. Stephen Abbott, Seminarian

Mrs. Tonya Reynolds, Parish Administrator

The Rev. Jason T. Antley

Mrs. Bailey Slice Parker, Music Director

Mrs. Beth Haggard, Preschool Director

Mr. Eric Abramson, Sexton

The Rev. Dr. Dennis Bolton, Pastor for Welcome and Visitation

Mrs. Sylvia Looney, Organist Emeritus

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