



February 17, 2021  
7:30 pm

First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
250 W Decatur St.  
Decatur, Illinois 62522

Website at <https://felcdecatur.org/videos>  
Facebook felcdecatur

Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter:  
We confront our own mortality and confess our sin before God within the community of faith.

This form and content of the service focus on the dual themes of sin and death in the light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ.

The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship, and the Imposition of Ashes can be a powerful nonverbal and experiential way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation.

In this year's liturgy we will be using oil, an alternative to ashes. At the time of imposition of ashes, please use olive oil to mark the sign of the cross on your forehead(s).

### **Welcome to Ash Wednesday @ Home**

Ash Wednesday is the day when we gather, to begin our forty-day journey called Lent. Every year we gather at church on this day to remind ourselves that we are not eternal. Yet, this year many of our local congregations are at home, not gathering in-person at church because of COVID-19 restrictions.

How might we mark the beginning of Lent when the way we have always done it is requiring us to change?

We invite you to join us from whatever location you find yourself in to mark the beginning of the Lenten season. This liturgy works well with one person or many.

#### **Liturgy**

If you are praying in solitude, pray and read the entire liturgy. If you are praying with family or friends divide up the readings and prayers so that everyone has a role.

# GATHER

## *WE ARE CALLED TO WORSHIP*

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**And also, with you.**

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

**God's mercy endures for ever and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.**

## *WE PRAY*

O God, maker of everything and judge of all that you have made, from the dust of the earth you have formed us and from the dust of death you would raise us up. By the redemptive power of the cross, create in us clean hearts and put within us a new spirit, that we may repent of our sins and lead lives worthy of your calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reign with you and the Holy Spirit; one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

# WORD

## *WE ASK GOD FOR ILLUMINATION*

Holy God, our lives are laid open before you. As we hear your word tonight, rescue us from the chaos of sin, and through the death of your Son bring us healing and make us whole in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*WE READ FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT*  
A reading from the book of Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

<sup>1</sup>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—  
<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>12</sup>Yet even now, says the LORD,  
    return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;  
    <sup>13</sup>rend your hearts and not your 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.

<sup>14</sup>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?

<sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
    sanctify a fast;  
call a solemn assembly;  
    <sup>16</sup>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.

<sup>17</sup>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 grass withers and the flower fades.  
**But the word of the Lord endures forever. Amen.**

*WE READ FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT*  
A reading from 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10

<sup>20b</sup>We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup>As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup>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! <sup>3</sup>We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every

way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup>truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

A lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

**Thanks be to God.**

### *WE READ THE GOSPEL*

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“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.

<sup>2</sup>“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. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“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. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>“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. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>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.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

**The Gospel of Our Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

*WE ENTER INTO A HOLY SILENCE*

**RESPOND**

*WE ARE INVITED TO OBSERVE A LENTEN DISCIPLINE*

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ: the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from

the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we have to renew our faith.

We invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel or bow before our Creator and Redeemer as we are able. (*brief silence*)

*WE CONFESS OUR SIN AND REMEMBER GOD'S  
PARDON - We pray Psalm 51:1-17*

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast  
love; in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through | from my  
wickedness, and cleanse me | from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know | my offenses, and my sin is ev- | er before  
me.

<sup>4</sup>**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.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my | mother's womb.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**

- <sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.
- <sup>8</sup>**Let me hear | joy and gladness;**  
**that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**
- <sup>9</sup>Hide your face | from my sins,  
and blot out | all my wickedness.
- <sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,**  
**and renew a right spir- | it within me.**
- <sup>11</sup>Cast me not away | from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.
- <sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation**  
**and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.**
- <sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways | to offenders,  
and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.
- <sup>14</sup>**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,**  
**and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**
- <sup>15</sup>O Lord, o- | pen my lips,  
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.
- <sup>16</sup>**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.**  
**You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**
- <sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit; a troubled and  
broken heart, O God, you will | not despise.

*We all confess in silence.*

### *WE GIVE THANKS OVER THE OIL*

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that this oil may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## WE IMPOSE THE OIL

Dip a finger in the oil and make a cross on the foreheads of each person. As they make the sign of the cross, say:

*“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Repent and believe the gospel.”*

Let us pray.

May the almighty and merciful God, who desires not the death of a sinner but that we turn from wickedness and live, accept our repentance, forgive our sins, and restore us by the Holy Spirit to newness of life. **Amen.**

## WE EXCHANGE WORDS OF GOD’S PEACE

Let us offer one another signs of reconciliation and love. All exchange signs and words of God’s peace.

## COMMUNION - WORDS OF INSTITUTION

*<sup>14</sup>When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup>He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup>for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” <sup>17</sup>Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup>for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” <sup>19</sup>Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>20</sup>And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (Luke 22:14-20)*

*WE PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER*

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

*WE ARE SENT OUT WITH A BLESSING*

May the Lord Almighty grant us a restful night, and in the end, peace. **Amen.**

*WE GO FORTH MARKED AND CLAIMED AS A CHILD  
OF GOD AND ENTRUSTED TO SHARE THE LOVE OF  
CHRIST WITH THE WORLD.*



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## 2021 LENT SCHEDULE

Ash Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM

Ash Wed. service will be available by livestream and posted to FELC website <https://felcdecatur.org/videos> and FELC Facebook

Midweek Schedule Wednesdays at 7:30 PM

Midweek Services will be by Zoom

February 24

March 3, 10, 17, 24

Holy Week

Holy Week services will be available by livestream and posted to FELC website <https://felcdecatur.org/videos> and FELC Facebook

Palm Sunday, March 28 at 9:30 AM

Thursday, April 1 at 7:30 PM

Good Friday, April 2 at 7:30 PM

Easter Vigil (Holy Cross Lutheran) at 7:00 PM

Easter Sunday, April 4 at 9:30 AM