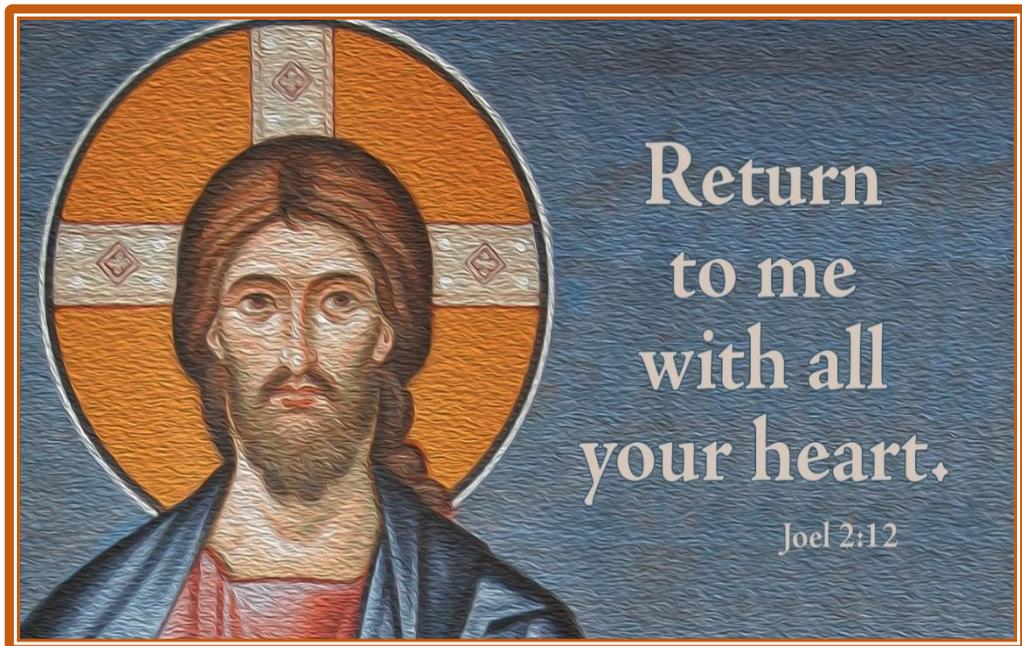


Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026 6:30pm



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



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Rev. Doug Hefner cell: (980) 234-8848 email: pastorhefner@aol.com
Sandi Tallant – Organist Todd Childers – Administrative Assistant
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 9am to 1pm
Tuesday and Thursday 12pm to 4pm

PRELUDE MUSIC

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS (*please stand when indicated by **)

***CALL TO WORSHIP:** (Based on Joel 2)

P: Blow the trumpet,

C: Sound the alarm,

P: For the day of the Lord is coming.

C: Announce his coming,

P: Call everyone together for a holy gathering,

C: Declare a holy fast,

P: Gather the people and set them apart,

C: Bring everyone together,

P: From the oldest to the youngest,

C: Leave whatever you're doing and listen,

P: Even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart.

C: Now is the time to return to the Lord.

P: Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

***GATHERING HYMN “Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling”**

WOV734

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you**

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

FIRST READING: Joel 2:12-19

¹²“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. ¹⁴Who 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?

¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. ¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep and say, “Spare your people, O Lord, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’” ¹⁸Then the Lord became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. ¹⁹The Lord answered and said to his people, “Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.” L: The Word of the Lord. C: **Thanks be to God**

SECOND READING Psalm 51:1-19

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving kindness;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

²Wash me through and through from my wickedness
and cleanse me from my sin.

³For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁴Against you only have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight.

⁵And so you are justified when you speak
and upright in your judgment.

⁶Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,
a sinner from my mother’s womb.

⁷For behold, you look for truth | deep within me,
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

⁸Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.

⁹Make me hear of joy and gladness,
that the body you have broken may rejoice.

¹⁰Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquities.

¹¹Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

¹²Cast me not away from your presence
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹³Give me the joy of your saving help again
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

¹⁴I shall teach your ways to the wicked,

and sinners shall return to you.

¹⁵Deliver me from death, O God,

and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

¹⁶Open my lips, O Lord,

and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

¹⁷Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,

but you take no delight in burnt offerings.

¹⁸The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;

a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will | not despise.

¹⁹Be favorable and gracious to Zion,

and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

***GOSPEL VERSE**

LBW p.63

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

***GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

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

{Jesus said,} ¹“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ²Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 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. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁵And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when 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 when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ¹⁹Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys 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. **C: Praise to you, O Christ**



**SERMON: “Return to the Lord Your God
For He is Gracious and Merciful: Bless Your
Heart!”
Pastor Doug Hefner**

***PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE:**

P: Let us draw near to God with an honest heart, confessing our sins to God the Father, and appealing to him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.
(silence is observed for reflection and self-examination.)

P: Almighty God,

C: We confess to you that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against you 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; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

P: We have received your many blessings with a lack of gratitude; and have failed to be good stewards of your Creation.

C: Have mercy on us, Lord.

P: We have followed our own selfish will and ways, and have failed to be your trusting and obedient servants.

C: Have mercy on us, Lord.

P: We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven, and have failed to be your witnesses in the world.

C: Have mercy on us, Lord.

P: We confess to you, Lord, all our unfaithfulness — our fear, our anger, our pride, and our trust in our own righteousness.

C: Accept our repentance, Lord.

P: We confess to you, Lord, our lack of concern for the needs of others, and our sense of entitlement to all we possess.

C: Accept our repentance, Lord.

P: We confess to you, Lord, our negligence in worship, and our rejection of your Word in our lives.

C: Accept our repentance, Lord.

P: Create in us a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within us.

C: Cast us not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from us. Give us the joy of your saving help again, and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Amen.

*** THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES:**

P: As children of a fallen humanity, each of us shares in the consequences of human sin. In the words that the Lord first spoke to Adam, he now reminds us all: “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:19)

Therefore, face to face, in the presence of God, we offer our confession in the spirit of our ancestor Job, who prayed:

C: I had heard you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:56)

P: As a sign of repentance, I now ask those who wish to do so, to come forward to receive the mark of the cross in ashes upon their brow.

As the pastor applies the ashes he will use these words: “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” Please let the usher know if you wish for the pastor to come to your seat.

HYMN sung during the IMPOSITION of ASHES: “Just As I Am” LBW 296

***THE PROMISE OF CHRIST:**

P: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

C: that we may show forth your glory in the world.

P: By the cross and passion of your Son, our Lord,

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

P: In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake, God forgives you all your sins. By his Holy Spirit, may he grant you true repentance that you may live with him in righteousness and purity forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

***THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he

ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

*** PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

(response for each prayer petition L: Lord in Your mercy C: Hear our prayer”)

*** SHARING OF GODS’ PEACE:**

L: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you. *(greet others with God’s peace)*

OFFERING

HOLY COMMUNION – MEAL OF GRACE

OFFERTORY SONG

Let the Vineyards

LBW p. 66

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of abundance C: we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

*** DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you. C: And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. C: We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*** WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

LBW p. 70

*** LORD’S PRAYER**

LBW p. 71

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: The Gifts of God for the People of God. C: Thanks be to God!

The assembly may be seated.

All are invited to receive Holy Communion

BLESSING AND PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your love and grace this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. C: Amen.

PASTORAL BLESSING The Lord bless you and keep you.... **C: Amen**

SENDING HYMN: "I Lay My Sins on Jesus"

LBW 305

***PREDICTION OF THE PASSION**

P: Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem... And the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, who will condemn him to death... And they will hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock him and scourge him, and finally, they will crucify him... But on the third day, he will rise. Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Introducing Jesus: Son of God, Messiah, Lord, & Savior of the World!

During Sunday School (9:15AM), Midweek Lent Service (6:30PM), and Holy Week, Pastor Doug will present video clips focusing on Jesus from the amazing, powerful, inspirational series called *The Chosen*. Each gathering will have prayers, some singing/praising, Scripture reading, and a short dramatic video clip highlighting our Scripture for that gathering. We will take some time to reflect together on the Scripture and video clip. This is for all ages! Some have termed a gathering like this as *Intergenerational*. In other words, bring your whole family! (especially children and youth!) There will be 12 studies! We will gather at 9:15am on Sunday mornings 2/22, 3/1, 3/8, 3/22, and 3/29. At 6:30pm on Wednesdays 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25. And on Maundy Thursday, 4/2 at 6:30pm and Good Friday, 6:30pm. Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings will be held in the Fellowship Hall. Light refreshments will be provided. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday will be held in the Sanctuary as part of our worship service on these days. Please note that on 3/15 we will gather at 9:15am for Ministry Team Sunday. All four ministry teams will meet that morning. Coffee and a light breakfast will be provided.

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace

Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard

Lector – Todd Childers Youth Leader – Stormy Shull

Altar Preparation – Cindy Bivens

Communion Assistants – Tina Hefner & Nicky Jarrett

Ushers – Jacob Jarrett & Jack Wilfong

Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Tim Eckard