



ASH

WEDNESDAY





IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

P.O. Box 39, 242 Main Street
Preston, MD 21655

*Caring for Our Community Through Christ
for over 125 Years!*

REV. DAVID CASEY-MOTLEY, PASTOR

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS & CONTACT INFORMATION

*Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
1:00 p. to 3:00 pm, and by appointment*

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For news and alerts, like us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/immanuel Lutheran preston

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Restrooms** are located downstairs. An elevator is available in the narthex.
- A **nursery room** is available at the rear of the Sanctuary for young children and their parents. The nursery room is equipped with a speaker so you can hear the service.
- **Worship Bags** are available in the nursery room every Sunday to help kids engage and participate in the service. They include coloring pencils, coloring sheets and Worship Guides. After worship service, keep your papers and place the bag back in the nursery room.
- **Registration cards** are placed in the back of the pews for worshipers to use for: 1) Visitor registration; 2) Communion registration for communion services; 3) Prayer requests may be written on the back of the card; after filling out the card, please place it in the offering plate.
- **Preprinted offering envelopes** are available in the pews for special offerings and Special Funds donations. Visitors are welcome to use these envelopes as well as members. Members, please make sure to note your envelope number on these special envelopes and place in the offering plate.
- **Kids Worship** - We love having children in church! It is so important for the kids to be welcomed and loved in God's house. Kids Worship is offered during the service, after the Bible Readings. Kids ages 3 through 10 can come downstairs where we offer an age appropriate lesson on the readings, snack and sometimes a craft. Children will return to the sanctuary on communion Sundays just before communion. For more information, contact Rene Langwost at 410-253-8735. No kids worship tonight.

We kindly request that all cell phones be silenced.



THE ORDER OF SERVICE

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE
MARCH 5, 2025 ~ 7:00 p.m.

WELCOME TO IMMANUEL!

Welcome, friends. We gather this somber night, remembering that we are but dust — yet dust formed by God’s own hands into precious, beloved children. Let us worship.

WORDS OF PREPARATION

I am dust, and to dust I shall return —
but marked with the sign of your saving cross, Lord Jesus.



HOLY COMMUNION AT IMMANUEL

Holy Scripture, according to St. Paul, clearly teaches that in Holy Communion we are receiving the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus, together with the bread and wine, for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our Christian faith and life. Furthermore, Holy Scripture clearly teaches that those who do *not share this* belief about the Sacrament would be sinning against Jesus if they were to receive the Sacrament (1 Corinthians 11:27, 29).

For this reason, if you desire to receive Holy Communion today, you are, in obedience to God’s Word (1 Corinthians 11:28), to examine yourself *before* receiving the Sacrament. To do so, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Have I been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
2. Do I believe that I am a sinner in need of God’s forgiveness?
3. Do I believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, paid for my sins by His death on the cross?
4. Do I believe that in Holy Communion Jesus gives me His true body and true blood, with the bread and wine, to forgive my sins and to strengthen my Christian faith and life?
5. Do I intend, with God’s help, to turn away from my sin and try to live as God wants me to live?

If you answer, “Yes,” to all five of these questions and you have been instructed in the Christian faith of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), then you are well prepared to receive the Sacrament here at Immanuel. If you are not in agreement and have not received instruction, we ask that you, out of great Christian love and concern for your spiritual welfare, to refrain from the Sacrament. If you are a visitor who has not communed with us before, we ask that you meet with our pastor as soon as possible to let him know your intention to commune prior to the service.

Those receiving the Sacrament should wait for the usher’s invitation to approach the altar. The pastor will offer the bread. The assistant will offer the individual cup of wine to those who desire to receive in that manner, after which the pastor will offer the chalice to those who desire to receive the wine in that manner. A few cups of white grape juice are available for those who are not able to drink wine.

♪ = *congregation sings response*

Stand

P Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

Silence for reflection.

P O Lord,

C have mercy.

P O Christ,

C have mercy.

P O Lord,

C have mercy.

P O Christ,

C hear us.

P God the Father in heaven,

C have mercy.

P God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

C have mercy.

P God the Holy Spirit,

C have mercy.

P Be gracious to us.

C Spare us, good Lord.

P Be gracious to us.

C Help us, good Lord.

P By the mystery of Your holy incarnation;

by Your holy nativity;

by Your baptism, fasting, and temptation;

by Your agony and bloody sweat;

by Your cross and passion;

by Your precious death and burial;

by Your glorious resurrection and ascension;
and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

C Help us, good Lord.

P In all time of our tribulation;
in all time of our prosperity;
in the hour of death;
and in the day of judgment:

C Help us, good Lord.

P We poor sinners implore You

C to hear us, O Lord.

P To prosper the preaching of Your Word;
to bless our prayer and meditation;
to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith;
and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:

C We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P To draw all to Yourself;
to bless those who are instructed in the faith;
to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the lonely, the forsaken,
the abandoned, and all who stand in need of our prayers;
to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy;
and to have mercy on us all:

C We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P To turn our hearts to You;
to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers;
and graciously to hear our prayers:

C We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C we implore You to hear us.

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C have mercy.

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C have mercy.

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C grant us Your peace.

P O Christ,

C hear us.

P O Lord,

C have mercy.

P O Christ,

C have mercy.

P O Lord,
C **have mercy. Amen.**

P O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

~ The Imposition of Ashes ~

Sit

The pastor and assistants receive ashes first, followed by the congregation. Using the right thumb, the pastor or an assistant places the ashes on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, saying:

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

Stand

Opening Hymn “From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee”

LSB 607

~ Confession and Absolution ~

LSB 184

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,
C **who made heaven and earth.**
P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,
C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

~ Service of the Word ~

Introit

Psalm 51:1–3, 10–12; antiphon: v. 17

P The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

C **Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.**

P Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

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

P Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit with-in me.

C **Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

P Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

♪ C ***Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.***

♪ C *Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.*

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.
♪ C *And with thy spirit.*

P Let us pray.
Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

♪ C *Amen.*

Sit

Old Testament 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 This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm

Psalm 51: 1-13

P ¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
C ²**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!**
P ³For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
C ⁴**Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.**
P ⁵Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
C ⁶**Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**
P ⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
C ⁸**Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.**
P ⁹Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

C ¹⁰**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**

P ¹¹Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

C ¹²**Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.**

P ¹³Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Epistle

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

¹Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Holy Gospel

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

♪ **C** ***Glory be to Thee, O Lord.***

¹[Jesus said:] “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.

²“Thus, 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.

⁵“And 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.

¹⁹“Do 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.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord
♪ C *Praise be to Thee, O Christ.*

Nicene Creed

C I believe in one God,
 the Father Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth
 and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;

**and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.**

**And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.**

**And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life † of the world to come. Amen.**

Sit

Sermon Hymn **“O Lord, throughout These Forty Days”** *LSB 418*

Sermon **“The Hand of the Lord That Freely Gives”** *Text: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21*

Offering **“The Word That Spoke in Darkness”** *Senior Choir*

Stand

Prayer of the Church

P Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

P Merciful God, in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, cleanse and renew our hearts from the stain of sin. Bring us to genuine repentance, pardon all our sins and renew our faith, that we may have a clear conscience. Grant us the aid of Your Holy Spirit to manifest the holiness of life which befits our calling through Holy Baptism. By faith, let us show forth the good works of Christ who called us from darkness into His marvelous light. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Save and defend Your Church from the enemies of Your Word. Give us faithful pastors and teachers who will gather Your sheep with Your voice, feed them Your blessed Sacrament and lead us into Your everlasting presence. Teach us the love of Your name and the desire for what is good and right, that we would renounce all false religion and love You with our whole heart, mind, body and strength. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Heavenly Father, You blot out transgressions and wash away iniquity. Sustain the families of Your Church, that husbands, wives and children would be cleansed from their sins and live together in peace. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Guard those in authority over us, especially our president and Congress, that our laws would be just and justly applied, for the punishment of the evildoer and for the pursuit of virtue. Where our laws are unjust or contrary to Your Word, in Your mercy make right the wrong, that we may act in good conscience as citizens of this land. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Comfort those in distress. Grant healing to the sick, peace to the troubled and Your presence to the dying [*especially those for whom our prayers have been requested, including _____*]. Bring us through trouble and trial by Your grace, that we may sing anew Your wondrous love and mercy. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Remember in mercy all who come today to receive the Savior's body and blood, that this Sacrament may turn our hearts in repentance, strengthen our faith, and embolden us to love and serve our neighbor. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Bless us, heavenly Father, on this holy day of repentance. As we enter the season of Lent, let us hold fast to Your Word. Teach us to die to self and serve You faithfully throughout this mortal life, until at last You bring us with the blessed saints into Your presence forevermore; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

~ Service of the Sacrament ~

Preface

LSB 194

P The Lord be with you.
♪ C *And with thy spirit.*

P Lift up your hearts.
♪ C *We lift them up unto the Lord.*

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
♪ C *It is meet and right so to do.*

P It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who overcame the assaults of the devil and gave His life as a ransom for many that with cleansed hearts we might be prepared joyfully to celebrate the paschal feast in sincerity and truth. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

LSB 195

♪ C *Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth;
heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.*

Lord's Prayer

LSB 196

C 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.

The Words of Our Lord

LSB 197

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My † body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

P In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My † blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Pax Domini

LSB 197

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

♪ C *Amen.*

Agnus Dei

LSB 198

♪ C *O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.*

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace. Amen.

Sit

Distribution

LSB 199

The pastor and those who assist him receive the body and blood of Christ first and then distribute them to those who come to receive, saying:

Take, eat; this is the true body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins.

Amen.

Take, drink; this is the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

Amen.

In dismissing the communicants, the following is said:

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart † in peace.

C **Amen.**

Communion Hymn

“Savior, When in Dust to Thee”

LSB 419

Stand

Nunc Dimittis

LSB 199

♪ C *Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Thanksgiving

LSB 200

P O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
♪ C *and His mercy endureth forever.*

P Let us pray.
We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

♪ C *Amen.*

Salutation and Benedicamus

LSB 201

P The Lord be with you.
♪ C *And with thy spirit.*

P Bless we the Lord.
♪ C *Thanks be to God.*

Benediction

LSB 202

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and † give you peace.
♪ C *Amen, amen, amen.*

Closing Hymn “Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go”

LSB 920

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book
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Joshua Ketelsen's Photos



The Imposition of Ashes

Understanding the Modern Practice of an Ancient Rite

Scriptural Basis

The placing of ashes and dust on the head or body is a symbol used throughout the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. In fact, there are no less than 22 different Scriptural references to this practice. They generally fall into two categories of meaning: contrition and sorrow.

As an act of contrition, the Imposition of Ashes had a wide variety of uses. It could be performed by an individual to indicate repentance for a specific sin. It could also be used by an entire community to demonstrate contrition for widespread disobedience. Finally, it could be used as an act of general purification before beginning a time of special religious significance (akin to fasting or fervent prayer).

As an act of sorrow, the Imposition of Ashes was likewise just as diverse in usage. It most often denoted a time of mourning following the death of a friend or family member. However, it might also be used to express sorrow and desperation when facing a seemingly hopeless situation or following a defeat.

Ecclesiastical Basis

With its long history in Jewish tradition, it's not surprising that early Christians likewise picked up this practice. As early as the 2nd c. A.D., the church father Tertullian records that those who had committed an especially grievous offense against the church would come before the pastor during the service to have ashes sprinkled on their heads as a sign of repentance and contrition before being reinstated into the congregation.

By the 5th c. A.D., the season of Lent had been designated as a time of repentance and reconciliation. Records show that many individuals who had committed public sins during the year would come forward during the first days of Lent to have ashes placed on their heads as a final act of confession.

Finally, between the 10th and 12th c. A.D., the church expanded this practice to the entire congregation and formalized it into the rite we know as the Imposition of Ashes, to be performed on the first day of Lent. Thus, "Ash Wednesday" was born.

Theological Basis

The theological basis underlying the Jewish and Christian practice of placing ashes on the head is most commonly understood to derive from Genesis 3:19: "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Death is the most severe consequence of our sin. Therefore, placing ash (which is both a form of dust and a symbol of death) on one's head is a reminder of our mortality and need for salvation.

The modern Christian Imposition of Ashes is also filled with other layers of symbolism. Placed at the beginning of Lent, we embark upon a time of mourning for Christ, who died so that we might live. In addition, the black mark of the ash on our face reminds us of the ways that sin has marred the image of God in us. However, placing it in the shape of a cross also reminds us that Jesus took that sin upon Himself on the cross. By Baptism we bear the mark of a child of God and are conformed to Christ's image.

The Imposition of Ashes at Immanuel

If you are unfamiliar with the Imposition of Ashes, here are a few additional notes to help everything go smoothly:

- The Imposition of Ashes is not a Sacrament. It is not mandated by God's Word and it does not offer the forgiveness of sins. However, we feel it is a helpful symbolic act and a useful tradition of the church.
- At the specified time during the service, those who wish to be marked with ashes should do so in a continuous, single-file line, as directed by the ushers.
- Do not feel obligated to come forward. Everyone is encouraged to do so but, if you feel uncomfortable, feel free remain seated.
- Children are invited to come forward. As this is not a Sacrament, there are no restrictions on who may receive it. However, please use discretion regarding young children who may feel uncomfortable receiving the ashes.
- You may wash the ashes off following the service whenever you feel the need or desire. They are not consecrated elements and there is no need to worry about keeping them on or washing them off in a special manner.

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**12:00 pm Vespers Service
w/ luncheon afterwards
provided by WinGS**

3/12 • 3/19 • 3/26 • 4/2 • 4/9

SERMON NOTES

Title

Text

Law

Gospel

Summary

Application