

March 5, 2025 | Ash Wednesday | 7:00pm

ST. JOHN'S CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Church on the Corner whose Cornerstone is Christ



Come Hear the Reason we're Inspired to Serve Together

*We are a community of faith founded upon God's Holy Word,
preaching salvation through believing in Christ as our Savior.*

We seek to live in God's truth, being obedient to His Word and following in His ways.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE OF CONFESSION AND HOLY COMMUNION

Lighting of the Altar Candles and Ringing of the Tower Bells

Welcome, Scripture and Prayer

Joel 2:12-13 (p. 901)

Prelude

“The Wonderful Cross”

Prayerful Call to Worship (L – Leader; **P – People**)

L: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

P: God the Father, creator of heaven and earth, have mercy on us.

L: God the Son, redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.

P: God the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide, have mercy on us.

L: Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God,

P: Have mercy on us, Loving God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to us who have gone astray from your ways, and bring us again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son.

†Hymn of Confession

#336, “Jesus, I Come”

Litany of Confession (L – Leader; P – People)

L: God created us to experience joy in communion with Him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with 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. 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 Jesus we are called to struggle against every thing that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love – the disciplines of Lent – can spiritually refresh us. I invite you to commit yourselves to this journey and confess your sins, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

L: Most Holy and merciful Father:

P: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on 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.

L: 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.

P: Have mercy on us, Lord.

L: 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.

P: Have mercy on us, Lord.

L: We confess our past unfaithfulness. The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

P: We confess to you, Lord.

L: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

P: We confess to you, Lord.

L: Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

P: We confess to you, Lord.

L: Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, our dishonesty in daily life and work,

P: We confess to you, Lord.

L: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

P: We confess to you, Lord.

L: 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,

P: Accept our repentance, Lord.

L: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

P: Accept our repentance, Lord.

L: For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

P: Accept our repentance, Lord.

L: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

P: Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great. Amen

Words of Assurance

† Hymn Response #342, “Just As I Am”

Prayer of Dedication and Sharing Our Tithes and Offering
Offertory “Come, Ye Disconsolate”

Scripture Reading Hebrews 12:1-6 (p. 1193)

† Song of Response “Come Unto Jesus”

Sermon “Repentant Sinners”

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Unison Prayer of Approach: ***Gracious and loving God, we come before you with open hearts, willing to look at the truth about ourselves, seeking healing and new life. We are preparing to make our Lenten journey, to travel with Jesus along the path which led him to the cross. Give us courage and confidence in Your constant love. Amen.***

Communion Invitation – Pastor

Words of Institution – Pastor

Unison Prayer of Blessing: ***Come Holy Spirit, bless these elements, these symbols of our Lord’s love. Bless us as we partake of this sacrament, so our lives of faith will be refreshed and our spirits joined with the risen Christ, who is in our midst. Amen.***

Distribution of the Elements

Communion Blessing – Pastor

† Closing Hymn #198, “Wonderful Grace of Jesus”

† Benediction

Joel 2:12-13 'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' ¹³ Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

Hebrews 12:1-6 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author 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 the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. ⁴ In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵ And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶ because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

Accompanist – Buffy Riley

Song Leader – David Stuckey

Easy Worship – Tom Hines

Sound Tech – James Grime

Live Stream – Ryan Christman

Head Usher – Matt Hines

Ushers – Mathilde Fouache, Molly Rutledge, Raegan Rutledge

Communion Servers – Ann Grime, Todd Nafziger, Nancy Rupp, Jeff Rutledge,

Darlene Steiner, Greg Walker, Carrie Wooley, Roger Zimmerman

LOOSE OFFERINGS will go the Aroles and to Back Bay Mission.

WE PRACTICE OPEN COMMUNION, so we invite to the Lord's Table all older youth and adults who believe in the Lord Jesus as Savior. Gluten-Free bread is served in the trays, and grape juice is served in the trays of the cup.

THE SEASON OF LENT

Ash Wednesday is the first day of the season of Lent, the 40 days (not counting Sundays) that precedes Easter. The date of Easter falls on the Sunday after the full moon after the vernal equinox, a time determined by the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. Easter is on April 20th this year.

"Lent" is from the Anglo-Saxon word for "lengthen," as in the lengthening days of spring. This season of 40 days has been celebrated by Christians at least since the early 2nd century. In the Christian Scriptures the number 40 relates to the period spent by Noah in the Ark, the period spent by Israel seeking the Promised Land after the Exodus, and the amount of time Jesus was in the Wilderness after his baptism and prior to beginning his ministry.

For us, the Season of Lent is when the passion and death of our Savior come into focus. It's observed as a time for growth in faith, as well as a time for deepening the devotional life of faithful Christians. It's an invitation to 40 days of renewal, 40 days to prepare ourselves to take in the Good News of Easter through the disciplines of prayer, self-denial, and rededication.

Ash Wednesday represents our sorrow for our sins, our repentance, and our morality. Receiving the sacrament tonight reminds us that God's love is triumphant over sin and death, that He remains "in communion" with us, and that through Christ's redemptive act on the cross, our mortality is overcome.

ST. JOHN'S CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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