

February 18, 2026
Ash Wednesday Readings

First Reading

A Reading from Joel

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—
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.

Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the Lord your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting from punishment.

(pause)

Reader: Word of God, word of Life.
Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel

A Proclamation of the Holy Gospel According to Matthew

Jesus said to the disciples:

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others
in order to be seen by them,
for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

“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.

But when you give alms,
do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,
so that your alms may be done in secret,
and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“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.

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.

“And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites,
for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting.

Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,
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.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth,
where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal,
but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven,
where neither moth nor rust consumes
and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Pastor: **The Gospel of the Lord.**

Congregation: Thanks be to God.