



St. Judes Episcopal Church

Seeking and Worshipping God, Reaching out to Others

February 18, 2026: Ash Wednesday
7:00 pm Service of Holy Communion with the
Imposition of Ashes

~~ Everyone is WELCOME here, for everyone is beloved by GOD ~~

Welcome to Lent, a season of preparation for Easter through spiritual self-examination, fasting from harmful practices or substances, giving to the needy, setting aside more time for prayer and Bible study, and generally trying to put Jesus in a more central place in our lives. Tonight we follow an ancient tradition of receiving ashes on our foreheads as we hear the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” – pointing us back to God’s creation of humans in Genesis, and forward to our death and burial, when a priest will commit our bodies back to the earth, *ashes to ashes, dust to dust*.

New to our church? We’d love to get better acquainted. Please leave your name and email or phone number in one of our guestbooks, located at both entrances of the worship space; or by filling out one of the Welcome cards in the pew.

All persons who desire to receive Holy Communion are served here, no questions asked. Today, we offer gluten-free Bread, which may be dipped into the small bowl of wine; or, consume your bread and sip wine from the chalice that follows. Or neither: just cross your arms over your chest. You may also ask a blessing from the priest.

Hymn # These hymns are located in the blue Hymnal 1982 in your pew.

WLP # These hymns are located in the green hymnal “Wonder, Love & Praise”

The Gathering of the Community

Prelude

Please stand as able, when the ministers enter. We begin with the Collect of the Day.

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

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

The Proclamation of the Word

Please be seated

The First Reading

Joel 2:1-2,12-17

Reader A Reading from the Book of the prophet 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, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. 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?

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; 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.

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?"

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to Gods people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

The Psalm

Psalm 103:8-14

During Lent, the verses of the Psalm will be sung by a Cantor and the congregation joins in the Antiphon.

ANTIPHON:

Choir, then all



Be with me, Lord, when I am in
trou - ble, be with me, Lord, I pray. —

8 The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.

9 He will not always accuse us, *
nor will he keep his anger for ever.

10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, *
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, *
so is his mercy great upon those who fear him. ANTIphon

12 As far as the east is from the west, *
so far has he removed our sins from us.

13 As a father cares for his children, *
so does the Lord care for those who fear him.

14 For he himself knows whereof we are made; *
he remembers that we are but dust. ANTIphon

The Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10

Reader A Reading from Pauls Second Letter to the Corinthians.

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 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! We are putting no obstacle in anyones way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute.

We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see ~ we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to Gods people. **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel Reading

Please stand _____ Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus said: “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.

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 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. 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Sermon *Please be seated* _____ The Rev. Susan Anslow Williams
A time of silence follows the sermon.

An Invitation to Lent *Please stand, in body or in spirit* _____

Presider Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and

meditating on Gods holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is then kept for a time, all kneeling. The Presider blesses the ashes:

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

All who wish are invited to receive the imposition of ashes, standing or kneeling at the Communion rail.

Psalm 51 is chanted by the choir during the imposition of ashes _____

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; * in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- 2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness * and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions, * and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against you only have I sinned * and done what is evil in your sight.
- 5 And so you are justified when you speak * and upright in your judgment.
- 6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, * a sinner from my mothers womb.
- 7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, * and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
- 8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; * wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
- 9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, * that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- 10 Hide your face from my sins * and blot out all my iniquities.
- 11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, * and renew a right spirit within me.
- 12 Cast me not away from your presence * and take not your holy Spirit from me.
- 13 Give me the joy of your saving help again * and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
- 14 I shall teach your ways to the wicked, * and sinners shall return to you.
- 15 Deliver me from death, O God, * and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.
- 16 Open my lips, O Lord, * and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- 17 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice; * but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; * a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

The Litany of Penitence *Please kneel, as able*

All **Most holy and merciful Father:**

**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.**

Minister 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.

People **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

Minister 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.

People **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

Minister We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,

People **We confess to you, Lord.**

Minister Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,
People **We confess to you, Lord.**

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

People **We confess to you, Lord.**

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

People **We confess to you, Lord.**

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

People **We confess to you, Lord.**

Minister 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,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

Minister For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

Minister For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

Minister Holy Trinity, One God, accept our thanks and praise for all the blessings of this life, especially for those blessings that our present circumstances make difficult to see,
Hear us, O Lord of Life.

Minister Knit together in your love all whose relationships have frayed, that they may find reconciliation and new beginnings,
Hear us, O Lord of Life.

Minister Grant all who turn to you the courage to participate with you in restoring this broken world to wholeness, that everyone and everything may share in the hope of your kingdom,
Hear us, O Lord of Life.

Minister Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;
Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Minister Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,
That we may show forth your glory in the world.

Minister By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,
Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Presider Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live, has given

power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardons and + absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe his holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace *Please stand* _____

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

Welcome and Announcements _____

Offertory *If you wish to give online, point your phones camera at the QR code to the right and tap the webpage that pops up. It will take you to the St. Judes online giving form.*



Offertory Hymn _____ *Dust and ashes touch our face*
Music is on the following page; please join the choir in singing.

The Doxology, sung by all after the Offertory Hymn _____

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. **Amen.**



1. Dust and ash - es touch our face, mark our fail - ure and our
2. Dust and ash - es soil our hands— greed of mar - ket, pride of
3. Dust and ash - es choke our tongue in the waste-land of de -



fall - ing. Ho - ly Spir - it, come, walk with us to - mor - row,
na - tion. Ho - ly Spir - it, come, walk with us to - mor - row,
pres - sion. Ho - ly Spir - it, come, walk with us to - mor - row,



take us as dis - ci - ples, washed and wak - ened by your call - ing.
as we pray and strug - gle through the mesh - es of op - pres - sion.
through all gloom and griev - ing to the paths of res - ur - rec - tion.

Refrain



Take us by the hand and lead us, lead us through the des - ert sands,



bring us liv - ing wa - ter, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.

Followed by the Doxology, previous page.

The Celebration of the Eucharist

The Eucharistic Prayer Please remain standing _____ Church of England

Presider The Lord is with you.

People And also with you.

Presider Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them to the Lord.

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Presider It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise, almighty God our Creator, through Jesus Christ your Son.

For in these forty days you lead us into the desert of repentance that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again. Through fasting, prayer and acts of service you bring us back to your generous heart. Through study of your holy word you open our eyes to your presence in the world, and free our hands to welcome others into the radiant splendor of your love.

As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast with joyful hearts and minds, we bless you for your mercy and join with saints and angels, forever praising you and singing:

Sanctus, #S-124 _____ *setting by D. Hurd*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The congregation may kneel or stand as the priest continues

Accept our praises, O God, through our Savior Jesus Christ, and as we follow his example and obey his command, grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit + these gifts of bread and wine may be to us his body and his blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross; we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; we look for the coming of your kingdom, and with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus:

All **Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life:
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Presider Accept through Christ, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise, and as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty, renew us by your Spirit, + inspire us with your love, and unite us in the body of Christ Jesus.

Through whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, O God, in songs of everlasting praise:

All **Blessing and honor and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen!**

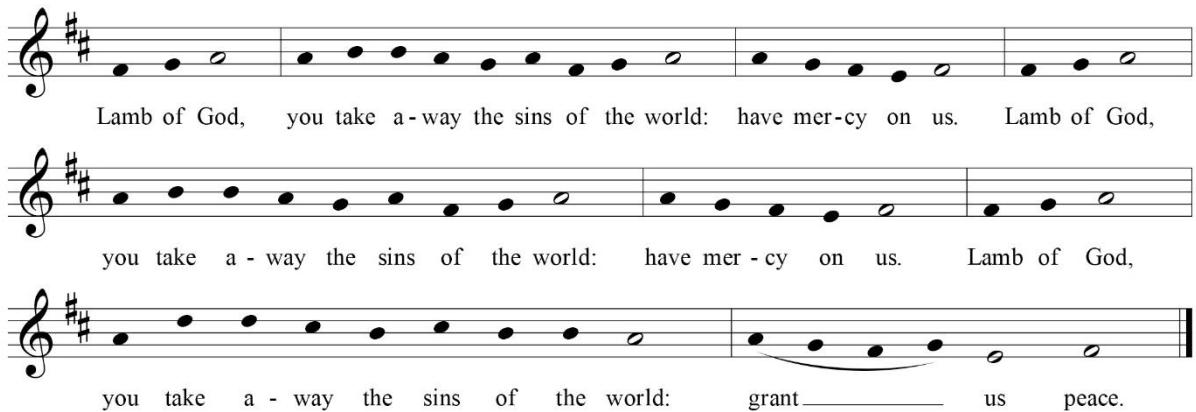
Presider As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

The Lords Prayer

All 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,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of Bread, *silence follows*

At the Fraction: Agnus Dei _____ setting by D. Hurd



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sins of the world: have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God,
you take a-way the sins of the world: have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God,
you take a-way the sins of the world: grant _____ us peace.

Invitation to Communion

Priest The feast is prepared, a banquet beyond measure or price.

Christ meets us here in our brokenness so that none may be lost,
and invites all who hunger for God to stretch out their hands to receive him.

Deacon These are the gifts of God for you, the beloved people of God.

The Communion

All are welcome but no one is obliged to receive. If you would prefer not to receive Communion,
please cross your arms across your chest indicating you would like to receive a blessing instead.
Today we are blessing gluten-free bread. The wine may be sipped from the chalice, or wait to intinct
(dip your bread) into the small bowl of blessed wine. Please do not intinct into the chalice.

Communion Hymn _____ *Spirit of God, descend upon my heart* LEVAS2 #119, sung to *Eventide* ("Abide with me")

1 Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
Draw it from earth; through all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou are,
And make me love thee as I ought to love.

- 2 I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,
 No sudden rending of the veil of clay,
 No angel visitant, no op'ning skies;
 But take the dimness of my soul away.
- 3 Teach me to feel that thou art always nigh;
 Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,
 To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;
 Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.
- 4 Teach me to love thee as thine angels love.
 One holy passion filling all my frame;
 The kindling of the heav'n descended dove,
 My heart an altar, and thy love the flame.

Prayer after Communion *Please stand or kneel* _____ *Source: Church of England*
Presider Let us pray.

All We thank you, loving God,
 that you have fed us in this sacrament, united us with Christ,
 and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all people.
 Empower us by your Spirit to witness and to serve,
 and send us out as faithful disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Solemn Prayer, in place of the Blessing during Lent _____

Deacon Let us bow down before the Lord.

Silent prayer

Presider Grant, most merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace, that they
 may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through
 Christ our Lord. Amen.

Closing Hymn #707 _____ *Take my life, and let it be*

Sending Out _____

The Deacon dismisses the congregation, after which the people respond: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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- “Dust and Ashes,” text by Brian A. Wren © 1989, Hope Publishing. Music by David Haas © 1991, GIA Publications.
- *Sanctus* (Hymn S-124) and *Agnus Dei* (Hymn S-161) by David Hurd: *New Plainsong* © 1981, GIA Publications.
- “Spirit of God, descend upon my heart,” hymn text by George Croly, public domain. Music: *Eventide*, by William Henry Monk, public domain.

Our Sunday Adult Class, “Following the Way of Jesus” begins this Sunday, Feb. 22 at 9:30 a.m. in Vandenbergh Hall. Each session begins with a video from the Holy Land presented by Palestinian Christians; discussion follows. No previous Adult Class experience is necessary.

Thursday nights: Simple Suppers begin next week, Feb. 26 – March 26, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm with our friends from First Presbyterian Church coming over to join us. We’ll be watching an episode of *The Chosen* each night, after a simple meal of soup, salad and bread. Please sign up in Vandenbergh Hall (at the far end) to let us know you’re coming and to provide components of our dinner once or twice. Thank you!

St. Judes Episcopal Church
106 E. Elizabeth Street, Fenton, MI 48430
(810) 629-5681  www.stjudesfenton.com
Sunday Service In-Person and Livestreamed on YouTube @ 10:30 am

About the Season of Lent

Lent lasts 40 days, not counting Sundays, beginning today and ending on Holy Saturday. The English word “Lent” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten* – lengthen, as in the hours of daylight in spring. Yay! In many other languages, the word for Lent is related to its 40 days: *cuaresma* in Spanish and Tagalog, *carême* in French, *quaresima* in Italian; or referring to the fasting that characterizes the season: *Fastenzeit* in German, *fastan* in Swedish, *paasto* in Finnish, *posta* in Russian. In all the languages of Christianity, Lent is a season of preparing ourselves to celebrate Easter. But how?

Lent began as a period of fasting and prayer, in preparation for Baptism by new converts to the faith. Later it became a time for penitence by all Christians. The First Sunday in Lent always includes the Gospel lesson of Jesus temptation by Satan, after being in the wilderness for 40 days (a *pretty long time*, in Bible parlance. Moses 40 years in the wilderness was a *really* long time – a generations worth.)

On the Sixth Sunday in Lent (Palm Sunday) we always hear an account of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and his subsequent Passion (=suffering) and death. Until Palm Sunday, the Scriptures in Lent focus on discipleship, the original purpose for these 40 days.

What will be your “Discipline” during Lent? Remember that the word is connected to “Disciple,” one who is taught / one who follows a teacher; in our case that’s Jesus. Any positive action or self-denial you take on should ***help you follow Jesus better***. Lent is a time-limited opportunity to try something you know would be spiritually helpful but maybe you’ve been putting it off. And because Sundays are always treated as “little Easters,” even in Lent, the penitential spirit *can and should be* lightened up on Sundays.

We hope you’ll join us often, on Sundays and/or Thursday evenings, for the Lenten disciplines we do together: eat simply, pray from the heart, study the stories of Jesus, sing or listen to music.

I look forward to joining you on the journey!

Rev. Susan