An abstract painting with a rich, textured surface. The composition is dominated by a central vertical element, possibly a doorway or a narrow path, which is rendered in shades of green, yellow, and white. This central element is flanked by large, bold areas of color: deep purple and magenta on the right, and various shades of blue and red on the left. The overall effect is one of depth and complexity, with visible brushstrokes and a sense of movement. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image, with the first part in pink and the second part in yellow-green.

Where
your
treasure
is,

there
your
heart will
be also

MATTHEW 6:21

Called by the Spirit, we serve Christ, sharing God's love with all.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

WEBSITE: firstlutherantopeka.org

1234 SW Fairlawn Road, Topeka, KS 66604

Church office: (785) 272-5302 CDO office: (785) 272-5999

Ministers

Pastor

Children's Day Out (CDO) Director

Caring for Kids 1st Director

Organist

Director of Music

Director of Handbell Choir

Secretary

Assistant Secretary

Bookkeeper

Missionaries in Russia

Missionaries for Ripe For Harvest World Outreach

All Members of First

Pastor Jenny Jackson

Julie Lamott

Bryleigh Willis

Jerry Anderson

Mark Fuller

Linda Anderson

LaDonna J. Little

Jill Loomans

Cindy Crawford

Rev. Bradn & Natasha Buerkle

Jim & Dawn Anderson

WE WELCOME all who worship with us today! We extend a special greeting to our visitors and invite you to worship with us again soon. Please make yourselves known to our pastor and people.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION: Lutheran Christians believe that in the sacrament of Holy Communion, by the power of God's Word and Holy Spirit, we receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ, along with the bread and wine, for our forgiveness and salvation. If you share in this belief, you are welcome to participate with us. Non-communing children and adults may come forward to receive a blessing. White grape juice is available, as well as gluten free wafers. If you desire to receive communion at your pew, please alert an usher during the prelude. Communion is done by intinction.

BRIEF WORD ABOUT OFFERING: Offering plates are available at the back of the worship space, on the bulletin table. To give online, please go to FirstLutheranTopeka.org and click on 'contribute'.

Please place attendance form in the offering plate.

WHEELCHAIR available in the north entranceway or in the church office.

EARPHONES for the hearing impaired and **LARGE PRINT BULLETINS.**



ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY

Setting 3

February 14, 2024

7:00 p.m.

PRELUDE “O God be Merciful unto Me” (BWV721)

(J. S. Bach)

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

CHIMES

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

A: We come to worship God as the Lenten season begins, aware of our frailty and our failings.

C: **We come seeking God's mercy, acknowledging our mortality.**

A: Having received the water of baptism,

C: **we come to be marked now with ashes.**

A: May we humble ourselves before God, not with a yoke of burden,

C: **but with a mantle of freedom in Jesus' name.**

PSALM 51:1-18 (*Spoken Responsively with Assisting Minister*)

¹Have 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.**

³For 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.**

⁵And 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 mother's womb.**

⁷For 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.**

⁹Make 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.**

¹¹Create 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.**

¹³Give 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.**

¹⁵Deliver 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.**

¹⁷Had 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.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who brings us out of captivity into freedom, out of the wilderness into the promised land, out of death into life.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Most holy and merciful God,

C: we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

P: 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.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: We have shut our ears 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.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

C: Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

P: Friends, God is for us, not against us. For that very reason, God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Believe the good news in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Now return to the Lord with joy and gladness. Sing a song of redemption. Let sorrow and sighing be no more, for we are forgiven.

C: Amen.

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

P: We bow our heads before you, O God, aware of our sinfulness and our shortcomings. Remembering our baptism, the watermark of the cross upon us, we also receive this ashen cross upon our foreheads--another sign that in life and in death, we belong to you. In the name of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and coming again, we pray.

C: Amen.

Congregation shall sit.

Those who desire to receive ashes come forward and kneel or stand as able at the communion rail.

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

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: Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

C: Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming Day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

¹Blow 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 — ²a 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.

¹²Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³rend 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. 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; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶gather 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. ¹⁷Between 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?'"

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Out of love for humankind, the Sinless One experienced sin and suffering so that the redemptive power of God could penetrate the darkest, most forbidding, and tragic depths of human experience. No aspect of human life is ignored by the presence of God's grace. Because of this, Paul announces that this day is a day of God's grace, an acceptable time to turn toward God's mercy.

^{20b}We entreat 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.

^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For 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!

³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see -- we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

601 HYMN "Savior, When in Dust to You" Stanzas 1 and 3

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

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "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.

²"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. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵"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. ⁶But 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.

¹⁶"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. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so 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.

¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Congregation shall sit.

SERMON

608 HYMN OF THE DAY *“Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”*

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

NICENE CREED

**C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**
**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**
**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: Trusting in God’s promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

A brief silence.

A: You call us to return to you, steadfast God. Renew a right spirit within the church and cleanse the hearts of your people. Strengthen those who proclaim your gospel in word and deed. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: You sustain your creation, generous God. Supply all that is needful for life to flourish. Protect endangered species and fragile habitats. Teach us to live lightly upon the earth and to honor it as our home. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: You seek justice and peace, righteous God. Rebuild cities and homelands devastated by war. Provide welcome, help, and safety to refugees. Prosper negotiations that lead to lasting peace among the nations. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: You care for all people, loving God. Heal any who are scarred by violence, addiction, or trauma of any kind. Comfort those who grieve and bring relief to any in pain. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: You gather this assembly, abiding God. Unite us in serving our neighbors and working for justice. We pray for caregivers and people who are hospitalized, in treatment, or recovering from illness. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: You redeem us from death, faithful God. We give thanks for those who served you in the church. Bring us with all the saints into everlasting joy. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C: Amen.

PEACE

P: In second Corinthians, Paul writes, "Finally, siblings in Christ, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace. And may the God of love and peace be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Congregation shall sit.

CHOIR ANTHEM "*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*"

(arr. G. Martin)

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal.

C: Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. Amen.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

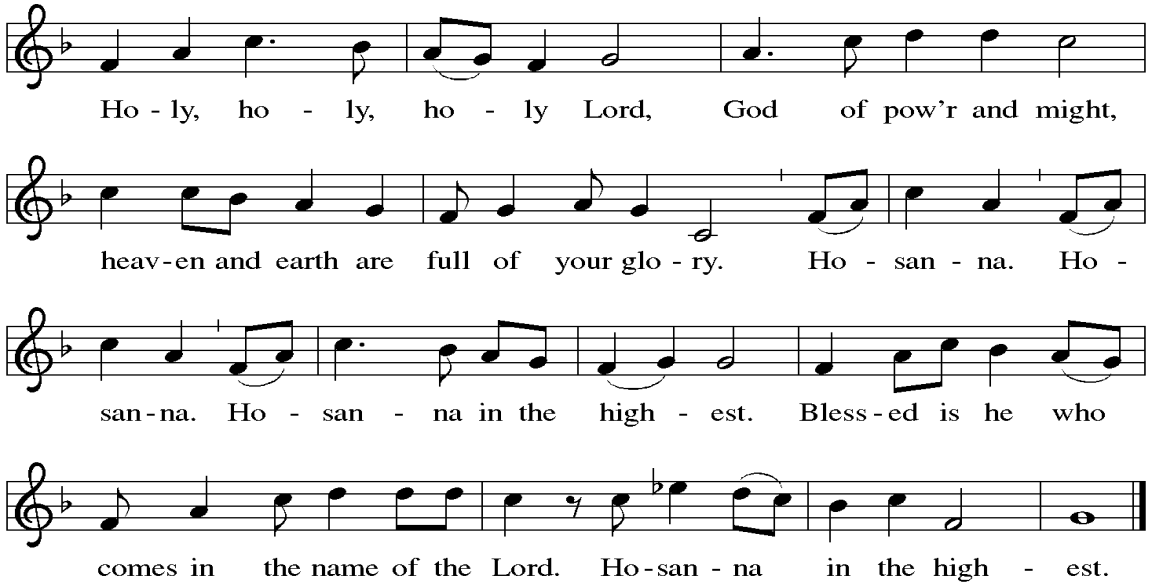
P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.....we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
 san - na. 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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

C: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Traditional)

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

P: Here is food and drink for the journey. Take and be filled.

Congregation shall sit.

COMMUNION SONG “*Lamb of God*”

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Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

COMMUNION VOLUNTARY “*What Wondrous Love is This?*”

(A. C. Whitworth)

Congregation shall stand or sit, as able.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

Congregation: Amen

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

A: Generous God, at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, now make us one loaf to feed the world; in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

C: **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

P: Beloved, we are God’s own people, holy, washed, renewed. God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and † give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

606 SENDING SONG “*Our Father, We Have Wandered*”

DISMISSAL

A: Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PLEASE LEAVE IN SILENCE.

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LAY MINISTERS 2/14	ASH WEDNESDAY	7:00 p.m.
Assisting Minister	Ann McConkey	
Lector	Kathy Koch	
Communion Assistants	Kathy Couch, Diane Dukat	
Greeters	Barb Collins, Nancy Vaughn	
Usher	Linda Harold	
Council Member	Lea Welch	
Altar Guild Setup/Clean up	Nancy Vaughn, Dana Nelsen, Barb Collins, Jeanie Schuler, Nancy Besta	
Tech Team	Austin Jackson, Stephen Blank	

LENT 2024 THEME: HOLY LAMENT
MID-WEEK LENTEN SERVICE ON THURSDAYS
BEGINNING FEBRUARY 22ND AT 7:00 PM



This series explores various kinds of lament found in scripture. Each week we will consider what it means to sit with our grief rather than try to push it aside. We will discover that many faithful believers have wrestled with grief, sorrow, and questions for God about why the innocent suffer. This series understands lament as one of the more faithful things we can do. When we approach God with honesty and humility, and we admit that some things are too big for our hearts to bear, we will find there is not a disapproving God but one who weeps with us. We will find a God who can take our grief and disappointment and transform them into holy joy and renewed hope. We will learn, ultimately, that Jesus’ death on the cross—the place to which the season of Lent leads us—is the reason we never mourn as those without hope.

A Reward We Cannot Earn

Lutherans trust that we are saved by grace through faith, apart from works, for the sake of Christ. Our salvation is a free gift, not something we can deserve or earn. So, what does it mean in the Gospel of Matthew when Jesus says God will reward us for faith practices such as almsgiving, prayer, and fasting?

When the fastest runner gets a trophy at the end of the race, that is a reward. Or when a potty-training toddler gets a sticker on her progress chart, we call that a reward. These are tokens of merit given in exchange for achievement. But the goodness that happens when we practice our faith is more of a natural outcome than a reward like these. It's closer to how a teacher might find their work with students fulfilling. Or how a gardener relishes the taste of his harvest stew. The reward we experience when we practice our faith is a natural outcome of returning to God.

At the outset of this holy season of Lent, think about your relationship with God, neighbors, and creation. What are the experiences, emotions, or beliefs that make you feel far from God? What are the systems, economies, or behaviors that alienate you from the earth? What are the conflicts, “isms,” or phobias that divide you from other people? And then, what would it look like to faithfully contend against those things, by the help of God, both individually and communally?

A rewarding Lenten piety will help us experience more fully the freedom, joy, wholeness, abundance, justice, and peace that God has always offered us. And so we do give alms and pray and fast, not because we're “supposed to,” nor because we want to earn the gold star—but because to return to the God who made us, loves us, and saves us is rewarding in itself. It is a reward we can never earn, but it's just the thing we need.

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