

St Stephen

Evangelical Lutheran Church



Encouraging and
strengthening faith in Jesus,
and sharing the joy of God's love.

February 10, 2016

Ash Wednesday

12:15pm & 7:00pm

Pastor Pedro Suarez.

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

—WE GATHER—

INTRODUCTION

Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.

The Sign of Ashes – *This day the ashes can be understood as a penitential substitute for water as a sign of baptism. The ashes suggest our human morality and how fragile life can be. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.*

Please stand as you are able

Pastor: We begin with worship In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

Responsive Reading of Psalm 51 (from the paraphrase *The Message*)

L: Generous in Love – God give grace! Huge in mercy – wipe out my bad record

C: Scrub away my guilt, soak out my sins in your laundry.

L: I know how bad I've been; my sins are staring me down

C: You're the One I've violated, and You've seen it all, seen the full extent of my evil.

L: You have all the facts before you; whatever you decide about me is fair

C: I've been out of step with you for a long time, in the wrong since before I've been born.

L: What you're after is truth from the inside out. Enter me, then; conceive a new true life.

C: Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean, scrub me and I'll have a snow white life.

L: Tune me in to foot tapping songs, set these once broken bones to dancing

C: Don't look too close for blemishes; give me a clean bill of health.

L: God, make a fresh start in me, shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.

C: Don't throw me out with the trash, or fail to breathe holiness in me.

L: Bring me back from gray exile, put a fresh wind in my sails!

C: Give me a job teaching rebels your ways so the lost can find their way home.

L: Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God, and I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways.

C: Unbutton my lips, dear God; I'll let loose with your praise.

L: Going through the motions doesn't please you, a flawless performance is nothing to you.

C: I learned God-worship when my pride was shattered.

L: Heart-shattered lives ready for love don't for a moment escape God's notice.

C: Make Zion the place you delight in, repair Jerusalem's broken-down walls.

L: Then you'll get real worship from us, acts of worship small and large,

C: Including all the bulls they can heave onto your altar!

GATHERING SONG:

Our Father, We have Wandered

ELW #606

Please use the Red Hymnals for words and melody

THE GREETING:

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray together:

C Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. AMEN

—WE HEAR GOD'S WORD—

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.

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 — 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**

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

Chapter 5

^{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.

Chapter 6

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.

P: Please stand as you are able

GOSPEL:

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

P: The Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew, the 6th chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord!

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

"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: Praise to you, O Christ!

SERMON

Rev. Pedro Suarez.

—WE RESPOND—

P: Please stand as you are able for the Sermon Song.

SERMON SONG

Savior, When in Dust to You

ELW #601

Please use the Red Hymnals for words and melody

INVITATION TO LENT

P: Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

CONFESSION OF SIN

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

Gracious God,

We confess that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. Forgive us and give us strength to turn from sin and to serve you in newness of life. Amen.

By water and the Holy Spirit, God gives us a new birth, and through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, + God forgives us all our sins. **AMEN**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

How to receive the imposition of ashes – *Those who would like to receive ashes will be welcome forward. If you have hair covering your forehead, please use your hand to hold your hair back off your head. As the ashes are applied in the sign of the cross, the words are said that echo Genesis 3:19, Ecclesiastes 3:20 and Psalm 103: “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return,” to which you may respond, “AMEN”*

P: Almighty God, you have created us out of the duct of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal live; through the same Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

C: AMEN.

You may come forward to receive the ashes. Once you have received the ashes, you may return to your seat

After those who desire ashes have received them, our worship continues

P: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation

C: that we may show forth your glory in the world

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

After each petition of the prayer is said:

A: Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share with one another the peace of the Lord.

~WE COME TO THE LORD'S TABLE~

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

Offering song:

Break Now the Bread of Life

ELW: #515

OFFERING PRAYER

A: God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Dialogue (Spoken)

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**

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.

The Lord's Prayer

P: And now, we come to You in prayer, as our Savior Jesus has taught us:

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.

Invitation of Communion

P: Taste and see that the Lord is good.

We believe Jesus Christ is present in the bread and wine by his Word of Promise. All baptized Christians are invited to participate in the celebration of God's forgiving love, strengthening faith, and grace-filled hope. Those who are not baptized and children not yet communing may come forward for a blessing (please cross your arms on your chest if you desire a blessing).

Reception of Communion

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

Communion distribution is continuous. Please come forward by the center aisle and receive the bread in your hands as you hear the words "The body of Christ, given for you" to which you may respond, "Amen." You may then dip the bread into the cup as you hear the words "The blood of Christ, shed for you," to which you may respond, "Amen." Please note that the communion wine is alcohol-free.

Communion Song: Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling

ELW #608

Please use the ELW Hymnal for the Words and Melody

Instrumental Music

Cesar Vidad

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

~WE ARE SENT FORTH~

Benediction

P: The blessing of God Almighty, the wisdom and power of + Christ Jesus, and the light of the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG: Bless Now, O God the Journey

ELW #326

Please use the ELW Hymnal for the Words and Melody

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Share the Good News.

C: Thanks be to God.

IN OUR PRAYERS

In our prayers today are these members of our homebound and others of our parish family in need of healing: Cynthia Langbauer. We also need to pray for: Marie Koach, Barbara Nilles, Carmen Crespo, Henry Rosua, Frank Odiema, Roy Kaptain, Jimmy Fennelli, Bob & Jane Reinhold, Larry and Beverly Sheehan, Dee Lauterberg, Chico E., Paul Hanzlik, C.C., Catherine Zippay, and for Adam and Krystynan and the Polkowski family.

Prayers for Friends of the Church: Joe Mullahey, Lexie Sachlis, George F., David Spall, Joan Coletti, Giacomo Dresseno, Jeannie Rogers, Adam Rubino, Berna, Braemen Weiner, Chandler Weiner, Debbie Fiore, Debbie Seckel, Elaine Brustad, Elizabeth Kraus, Hazel Quire, Juan Tavarez, Kenneth Smith, Mary Taylor, Norma Duckworth, Cynthia, Tim Tyler, Richard H., Antonio C., Mireya D., Laurie Engelhardt, Emma Holmes and her family, Joe Papagno and for the Miller, and DeBolt families at the death of Zac Miller., for the Silato Family who lost their father, Tony last Monday, Also, Cynthia McCormick and Lemmuel Knowles Sr.

We are always updating our prayer list. If you would like your name added or removed, please notify Pat Belanger or the office.

Announcements

THURSDAY (PRAISE AND PRAYER): Only this Thursday, February 11th our Praise and Prayer has been cancelled, we will resume on the 18th. Thank you.

BREAKFAST BRUNCH: Saturday, February 13 Debra Georgia is our guest speaker. Everyone is welcome. Please join us.

BISHOP VISIT: Every year Bishop Robert Schaefer visits different parts of our Florida Bahamas Synod, to renew the vows of those in ministry for the church and to bless the oils used in our sacramental rites. On Saturday, February 20, Bishop Schaefer will visit our church, St. Stephen, and we will worship together in the morning at 9:45. All are welcome to come!

QUILT SUNDAY: Sunday, February 21 at all services "Thread of Love" quilt group will be displaying their projects to the congregation and to be blessed.

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY: Beginning Wednesday, February 17th Pastors Pedro Suarez and Tom Peterson will be leading a Bible study at 12:15p.m. If you would like to receive material for this Bible study online please email Pastor Suarez at ststephenpastor@gmail.com



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Sunday Worship Schedule

Praise and Faith formation 9:00 a.m.
Traditional Blend Worship Service at 10:15 a.m.
Latino Worship Service at 12:30 p.m.
Holy Communion is celebrated weekly

Church Staff

Rev. Pedro Suarez – Pastor
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Congregation Council

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