

Together in Christ, Empowered to be and Make Disciples.



*Broken and Beloved:
Stories of God's Steadfast
Love*

*The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and
saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18*

Ash Wednesday: David-Broken by Sin

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.*

Psalm 51:10

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 6:15 pm

Contemplation

Life is this strange, tender mix, isn't it? Joy and sorrow. Love and loss. Big wins and even bigger failures. We cling tightly to the beautiful moments, but then the phone rings, a diagnosis drops, or some creeping ache reminds us that everything—everything—is so much more fragile than we'd like to admit. Life can be too much. And Lent is the season where we sit in that heaviness. For 40 days, we stop pretending things will suddenly get better and face the truth: life is fragile, and so are we.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when we hear the words no one really wants to say out loud: you are dust, and to dust you shall return. It's not exactly the kind of thing you'd embroider on a pillow, but it's a truth we need. Lent invites us to stop pretending we can hold it all together and instead sit with the weight of what we carry—the grief, the regrets, the messes we can't untangle, no matter how much we try.

To be human is to carry the weight of our own mortality. We love the joy and triumph of Easter morning, but first, we have to sit with Good Friday. Jesus, who we look to for hope and healing, suffers and dies. His pain is real, just like ours. We can't rush past it. We can't skip to the good part, because it's through the deepest hurt that we begin to understand what it means to be fully human, fully broken. Kate Bowler



Welcome (VOCARE: “to call”)

Gathering Song “The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Has Ended” ELW 569 vs 1,2

Call to Worship

Christ is with you.

And also with you.

We come together at the eve of the day, trusting that God is near to the broken-hearted and brings shalom to those whose spirits are crushed. We carry with us all the seasons of our lives – lives marked by joy and sorrow, peace and conflict, ease and distress, brokenness and beloved-ness.

Meet us here, Oh Christ. Strengthen us, renew us, nourish us in your call for our lives, and bring us shalom.

We come to reflect on our values and consider how they inform our actions and decisions.

May we be mindful of what we truly value in life and how our values are reflected in our choices.

We come to be open to the ways in which God is calling us, and how we can respond with faith and courage.

May we be open to the movements of the Spirit and ready to follow where God leads.

We come to be aware of the many and varied voices that call to us each day, listening especially for those voices that are life giving and life-sustaining.

May we be discerning in the voices that form and shape us, heeding those that build up and turning away from those that tear down.

We come to practice attentiveness, focusing our minds on God's presence in our lives, and seeking divine guidance and wisdom.

May we be attentive to the holy and receptive to the wisdom and guidance of God.

We come to name any regrets we may have, seeking forgiveness and renewal as we move forward.

May we find healing and renewed purpose as we seek and receive God's forgiveness.

We come to be mindful of experiences of God's presence in new and profound ways.

May we be receptive to the ways in which the divine is revealed to us, and may we be transformed by these encounters.

We come to worship together, opening ourselves fully to the love and presence of God. **Amen.**

Values (Scripture)

As we prepare to hear the Word of God, we reflect on our values. Our values are what we hold dear and what we prioritize in life. They inform our actions and decisions, and shape who we are and who we are becoming.

(silence for reflection)

We now turn our hearts and minds to the reading of the Word, asking God to speak to us through the Holy Scriptures.

Psalm 51 is read (Response-Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**)

Openness (Centering)

As the seasons rise and fall in our lives and in the life of the whole world, we open our hearts to God's leading, and ask God to help us be receptive and responsive to God's calling in our lives. We sing together:

Centering Song Song of the Seasons

In your hands — you hold the sun and moon and stars —
They rise and fall Be - cause of who you are. —
Sea - sons will change. And they al - ways will.
Sea - sons will change. But your faith - ful - ness ne-ver will;
Spring or sum - mer win - ter or fall
you are there with us through it all.
Ev - ry sea - son Ev - ry day You are with us
all - the way! Sea - sons will change.

Call (Reflection Monologue)

Through the sharing of the Word, you have called us, O God.
Lead us by your Spirit to live out this call.

Attentiveness (Prayer)

Ever watchful Lord,
Your steadfast love never ceases, and your mercies are new every morning. As we gather this evening under your watchful presence, we pray for the grace to be more attentive to your presence in our lives.

For the church universal, that our leaders and members may be attuned to the whispers of your Spirit, we pray:
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the world and its leaders, that they may be attentive to the needs of the marginalized and act with justice and compassion, we pray:
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For our community, that we may notice those in need and respond with kindness and empathy, we pray:
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For ourselves, that we may be fully present in each moment, aware of your persistent love and guidance, we pray:
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who are suffering, that they may feel your comforting presence and know they are not alone, we pray:
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
(Other petitions may be added)

Lord, grant us the grace to be attentive to your voice amidst the noise of the world. Help us to be present, to notice, and to respond to your call in our lives. **Amen.**

Regrets (Confession)

Gracious God, We gather before you, acknowledging our human frailty and our need for your grace. We bring our full selves to you – in all our brokenness and beloved-ness, seeking your shalom. In this moment of confession, we bring our regrets, the actions we wish we could undo, the words we wish we could unsay.

We confess that we have not always lived in accordance with your will. We have chosen our own way over yours, and we have caused harm to ourselves and others. **We carry the weight of these regrets, Lord.**

We confess the times we have closed our hearts to your love, the times we have turned away from our neighbor in need, the times we have neglected the care of your creation. **For these, and all our regrets, known and unknown, we seek your forgiveness.**

In your great mercy, Lord, forgive us. Heal the wounds of our past mistakes and free us from the burden of regret. Grant us the courage to seek reconciliation, and the wisdom to learn from our past. **Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

In the mercy of Almighty God, Father +Son, and Holy Spirit, Beloved Ones, your sins are forgiven in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Experience God's Presence

Invitation to Lent

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.

Explanation of the Ritual of Ashes and the Imposition of Ashes

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of our Lenten journey— a penitential period with an unmistakable accent on our human frailty.

This evening ashes will be available for those who desire to receive them. We mark ourselves with ashes in remembrance of the fact that God created human life from the dust of the ground, and in expectation of the fact that we will, in death, return again to the dust of which we were made.

(As Genesis 3:19 reminds us...We are dust and to dust we shall return.)
The sign of the cross on our foreheads is "sign and seal," as it is called,
as a way to remember that we are marked and held as God's own, through
all of the Brokenness and Blessedness of our lives.

Strangely, however, ashes are also a sign of cleansing. They have an
abrasive quality which can be used to make things clean, and were
frequently used in this way in times past. We pray in tonight's psalm
that God would give us clean hearts and new spirits.

At this time, we simply invite those who wish to come forward to do so,
pew by pew. (The ushers will not be directing you.)

Offering

Holy Communion

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, creator of the universe, who brings forth
bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. In the cool of the evening, you
walked with Adam and Eve in the garden, and in the fullness of time, you
revealed yourself in the person of Jesus.

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

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to 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 in remembrance of me."

With thanksgiving, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

As we partake of this holy meal, may we experience anew your presence
among us. Strengthen us, O God, for service in your world, and make us
one in Christ, through the power of your Spirit. **Amen.**

Praying now in whatever language or translation is the language of your
heart:

The Lord's Prayer

Communion Songs "Abide with Me" ELW 629
"Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song" ELW 808

Prayer for our Human Family

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; so that, in your good time, every people and nation may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Benediction

As God's Beloved Ones, covered by God's promise of shalom, we practice *VOCARE* as we prepare to end this day and look toward tomorrow.

We acknowledge our values, and seek to live in accordance with them, following the example of Christ.

We strive to be open to the new ideas and opportunities for growth that the Holy Spirit may bring.

Grant us the grace to be receptive to your guidance and to step boldly into the unknown.

We listen for the call of our deepest selves and respond with courage and faith, trusting in God.

Help us to discern your voice amidst the noise of the world, and to be your faithful disciples.

We cultivate attentiveness to the present moment, where we encounter the divine in our daily lives.

May we find you in unexpected places and moments, and be mindful of your presence around us.

We face our regrets with compassion, seeking the insight they offer and the grace of forgiveness.

Give us the strength to learn from our mistakes and to reconcile with those we have wronged.

And we give thanks for the ways we have experienced God's presence in our lives today and every day.

For your constant love and provision, we give you thanks and praise. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

Sending Song “The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Has Ended” ELW 569 vs 3,4

Prayer Mosaic

When you arrived at worship this evening, you were invited to pick up pieces of felt. Each piece represents a prayer. Take a few moments now to reflect on this evening’s service. With each piece of felt, offer your prayers to God by trusting that God who is near to the broken-hearted hears our prayers in whatever way they are offered—even as sighs too deep for words. As you leave, please bring your prayer fabric to the table at the back of the church. We will create a mosaic with these pieces and add to it each week.

Postlude

You are encouraged to take your bulletin home with you to refer to throughout the Lenten Season.

A Take Home Blessing for Ash Wednesday

These days of dust. These days of despair. Reality speaks to us clearly. So we approach—carefully, hesitantly, barely ready to hear the hard truths we long to be told about the beauty and terror of mortality. How strange it feels, so right and so good, to move forward together, wearing our finitude like a badge— a mess of ash, a reminder: you are dust, and to dust you shall return. How strange it feels, so right and so good, to stand at the edge of awareness— the balance point between being and non-being. I catch my breath as I look and see shining faces. I see it all in an instant: how precious, how holy, how fleeting and infinite each imperfect life. How beautiful, how stubborn, how unfinishable each single existence. We wear this truth, moving forward together, our dust shining like radiant hope.

Kate Bowler. “A Blessing for Ash Wednesday” in *Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day: Daily Meditations for the Ups, Downs, and In-Betweens*. (New York: Convergent Books, 2024).

This liturgy was adapted from an “Evening VOCARE Worship” written by Eric E. Parrish, Music Director, First Lutheran Church, Worthington, MN in consultation with Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox, Director of Programming, Engagement, and Innovation for Congregational Thriving, through the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN.

“Song of the Seasons,” was composed by Rev. David Efflandt as a part of the Nourishing Vocation with Children Project at St. Olaf College. Worshiping Communities are welcome to reproduce the lyrics and music for local use, with appropriate attribution.

This booklet is provided by the Nourishing Vocation with Children Project through the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN.

Weekly Lenten Services 2025

BROKEN and BELOVED

Ash Wednesday, March 5th, 6:15pm
David-Broken by Sin
Psalm 51, Create in Me a Clean Heart

Wednesday, March 12th, 6:15pm
Week 2: Naomi-Broken by Grief
Ruth 1: 19b-21a, Call Me Mara

Wednesday, March 19th, 6:15pm
Week 3: Elijah-Broken by Fear
I Kings 19:1-15a, He was Afraid

Wednesday, March 26th, 6:15
Week 4: The Syrophenician Woman-
Broken by Desperation
Mark 7:24-30, She Begged Him

Wednesday, April 2nd, 6:15pm
Week 5: Mary Magdalene-Broken by Demons
Luke 8:1-3, Mary, Called Magdalene

Wednesday, April 9th, 6:15pm
Week 6: Peter-Broken by Failure
Luke 22: 54-62, He Denied It

Maundy Thursday, April 17th, 6:15pm
He took a Towel
John 13:3-15; 34,35

Good Friday, April 18th, 6:15pm
Torn in Two
Mark 15:21-41

Vocare Basics



Vocare is an ongoing spiritual practice designed to help you discern and embrace your multiple vocations so that you can more intentionally live life on purpose for the common good. Vocare invites regular reflection upon values, openness, call, attentiveness, regret, and the experience of God's presence. Vocare can be used by individuals, small groups, and whole congregations.

V

Values: What do I value, and how am I living my values?

O

Openness: To what am I being asked to be open? How do I respond?

C

Call: What voices are calling to me? Which ones do I listen to, and why?

A

Attentiveness: Where am I giving my attention? Does my attention align with my values?

R

Regret: What are my regrets? What insight do I gain from them?

E

Experience God's presence: When, where, and how have I encountered the presence of the holy in my everyday life?

What do I need?

In light of your reflection today, name what you need to lean into your vocations in the future.

The Vocare Spiritual Practice is designed by Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox as part of the Nourishing Vocation Project through the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College.

Lent and Holy Week Schedule 2025

- 3/5 6:15 Ash Wednesday Worship w/Communion**
- 3/12 5:30 Meal/6:15 Worship/7-7:45 Confirmation**
- 3/19 5:30 Meal/6:15 Worship/7-7:45 Confirmation**
- 3/26 5:30 Meal/6:15 Worship/7-7:45 Confirmation**
- 4/2 5:30 Meal/6:15 Worship/7-7:45 Confirmation**
- 4/9 5:30 Meal/6:15 Worship/7-7:45 Confirmation**
- 4/13 8 & 10:15am PALM SUNDAY Worship w/Communion**
- 4/17 6:15 Maundy Thursday Worship/First Communion**
- 4/18 6:15 Good Friday Worship**
- 4/19 5:30 Holy Saturday Chapel Worship**
- 4/20 8 & 10:15am EASTER Worship w/Communion**

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