

+SERVICE OF PRAYER  
AND PREACHING+

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+ASH WEDNESDAY+ 14 FEBRUARY 2024+



Remember man  
that you are  
dust and into  
dust you shall  
return.

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The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

A member congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

902 S. Maple

Inglewood, CA 90301-3824

[tgsicms.org](http://tgsicms.org)

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Hymn

608 Lord, to You I Make Confession



1 Lord, to You I make con - fes - sion: I have sinned and  
 2 Yet, though con - science' voice ap - pall me, Fa - ther, I will  
 3 For Your Son has suf - fered for me, Giv'n Him - self to  
 4 Lord, on You I cast my bur - den— Sink it in the



gone a - stray, I have mul - ti - plied trans - gres - sion,  
 seek Your face; Though Your child I dare not call me,  
 res - cue me, Died to save me and re - store me,  
 deep - est sea! Let me know Your gra - cious par - don,



Cho - sen for my - self my way. Led by You to  
 Yet re - ceive me in Your grace. Do not for my  
 Rec - on - ciled and set me free. Je - sus' cross a -  
 Cleanse me from in - iq - ui - ty. Let Your Spir - it



see my er - rors, Lord, I trem - ble at Your ter - rors.  
 sins for - sake me; Let Your wrath not o - ver - take me.  
 lone can van - quish These dark fears and soothe this an - guish.  
 leave me nev - er; Make me on - ly Yours for - ev - er.

Text: Johann Franck, 1618–77; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.  
 Tune: Johann Crüger, 1598–1662  
 Text and tune: Public domain

*Kneel, stand, or sit, as you are able.*

**P** Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

*Silence for reflection.*

### **Litany for Ash Wednesday**

- P** O Lord,  
**C** **have mercy.**
- P** O Christ,  
**C** **have mercy.**
- P** O Lord,  
**C** **have mercy.**
- P** O Christ,  
**C** **hear us.**
- P** God the Father in heaven,  
**C** **have mercy.**
- P** God the Son, Redeemer of the world,  
**C** **have mercy.**
- P** God the Holy Spirit,  
**C** **have mercy.**
- P** Be gracious to us.  
**C** **Spare us, good Lord.**
- P** Be gracious to us.  
**C** **Help us, good Lord.**
- P** By the mystery of Your holy incarnation;  
by Your holy nativity;  
by Your baptism, fasting, and temptation;  
by Your agony and bloody sweat;  
by Your cross and passion;  
by Your precious death and burial;  
by Your glorious resurrection and ascension;  
and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:  
**C** **Help us, good Lord.**
- P** In all time of our tribulation;  
in all time of our prosperity;  
in the hour of death;  
and in the day of judgment:  
**C** **Help us, good Lord.**

**P** We poor sinners implore You

**C** to hear us, O Lord.

**P** To prosper the preaching of Your Word;  
to bless our prayer and meditation;  
to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith;  
and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:

**C** We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

**P** To draw all to Yourself;  
to bless those who are instructed in the faith;  
to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the lonely, the forsaken, the abandoned, and all who stand in need of our prayers;  
to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy;  
and to have mercy on us all:

**C** We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

**P** To turn our hearts to You;  
to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers;  
and graciously to hear our prayers:

**C** We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

**P** Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

**C** we implore You to hear us.

**P** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**C** have mercy.

**P** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**C** have mercy.

**P** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**C** grant us Your peace.

**P** O Christ,

**C** hear us.

**P** O Lord,

**C** have mercy.

**P** O Christ,

**C** have mercy.

**P** O Lord,

**C** have mercy. Amen.



**P** O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen

*Sit*

## The Imposition of Ashes

*The pastor and assistants receive ashes first, followed by the congregation. Using the right thumb, the pastor places the ashes on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, saying:*

***Remember, o man, that you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.***

*After receiving the ashes, each person returns to his place in silence. There is no statement of dismissal.  
After all have received the ashes, the service continues with the Service of Vespers.*

### Hymn

### 419 Savior, When in Dust to Thee



1 Sav - ior, when in dust to Thee Low we bow the a -  
 2 By Thy help - less in - fant years, By Thy life of  
 3 By Thine hour of dire de - spair, By Thine ag - o -  
 4 By Thy deep ex - pir - ing groan, By the sad se -



dor - ing knee; When, re - pen - tant, to the skies  
 want and tears, By Thy days of deep dis - tress  
 ny of prayer, By the cross, the nail, the thorn,  
 pul - chral stone, By the vault whose dark a - bode



Scarce we lift our weep - ing eyes; O, by all Thy  
 In the sav - age wil - der - ness, By the dread, mys -  
 Pierc - ing spear, and tor - turing scorn, By the gloom that  
 Held in vain the ris - ing God, O, from earth to



pains and woe Suf - fered once for us be - low, Bend - ing  
te - rious hour Of the in - sult - ing tempt - er's pow'r, Turn, O  
veiled the skies O'er the dread - ful sac - ri - fice, Lis - ten  
heav'n re - stored, Might - y, re - as - cend - ed Lord, Bend - ing



from Thy throne on high, Hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!  
turn a fa - v'ring eye; Hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!  
to our hum - ble sigh; Hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!  
from Thy throne on high, Hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!

Text: Robert Grant, 1779–1838, alt.  
Tune: Joseph Parry, 1841–1903  
Text and tune: Public domain

## Readings

### Old Testament Reading

*Jonah 3:1–10*

#### Jonah Goes to Nineveh

<sup>1</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” <sup>3</sup>So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days’ journey in breadth. <sup>4</sup>Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” <sup>5</sup>And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

#### The People of Nineveh Repent

<sup>6</sup>The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. <sup>7</sup>And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, <sup>8</sup>but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. <sup>9</sup>Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.”

<sup>10</sup>When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Psalm

*Psalm 51:1-13*

### **Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your | steadfast love,\*  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my trans- | gressions.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me thoroughly from my in- | iquity,\*  
and cleanse me | from my sin!**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my trans- | gressions,\*  
and my sin is ever be- | fore me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil | in your sight,\*  
so that you may be justified in your words  
and blameless in your | judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Behold, I was brought forth in in- | iquity,\*  
and in sin did my mother con- | ceive me.

<sup>6</sup>**Behold, you delight in truth in the inward | being,\*  
and you teach me wisdom in the | secret heart.**

<sup>7</sup>Purge me with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;\*  
wash me, and I shall be whit- | er than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear joy and | gladness;\*  
let the bones that you have bro- | ken rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face | from my sins,\*  
and blot out all my in- | iquities.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean heart, | O God,\*  
and renew a right spirit with- | in me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from your | presence,\*  
and take not your Holy Spirit | from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of your sal- | vation,\*  
and uphold me with a willing | spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Then I will teach transgressors | your ways,\*  
and sinners will re- | turn to you.

<sup>2</sup>May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

**Make Your Calling and Election Sure**

<sup>3</sup>His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, <sup>4</sup>by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. <sup>5</sup>For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, <sup>6</sup>and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup>and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup>For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. <sup>10</sup>Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. <sup>11</sup>For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**The Holy Gospel***Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

**C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But when 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. . . .

<sup>16</sup>“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup>but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

## Responsory

**P** We have an advocate with the Father: Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

**C** He was delivered up to death; He was delivered for the sins of the people.

**P** Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

**C** He was delivered up to death; He was delivered for the sins of the people.

**P** We have an advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

**C** He was delivered up to death; He was delivered for the sins of the people.

*Stand*

## Ten Commandments

**C** You shall have no other gods.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

## **Apostles' Creed**

**☩ I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

**☩ 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.**

Hymn

614 "As Surely as I Live," God Said



1 "As sure - ly as I live," God said, "I would not  
 2 And so our Lord gave this com - mand: "Go forth and  
 3 "All those whose sins you thus re - mit I tru - ly  
 4 "What you will bind, that bound shall be; What you will



see the sin - ner dead. I want him turned from  
 preach in ev - 'ry land; Be - stow on all My  
 par - don and ac - quit, And those whose sins you  
 loose, that shall be free; To My dear Church the



er - ror's ways, Re - pen - tant, liv - ing end - less days."  
 par - d'ning grace Who will re - pent and mend their ways.  
 will re - tain Con - demned and guilt - y shall re - main.  
 keys are giv'n To o - pen, close the gates of heav'n."

- 5 The words which absolution give  
 Are His who died that we might live;  
 The minister whom Christ has sent  
 Is but His humble instrument.
- 6 When ministers lay on their hands,  
 Absolved by Christ the sinner stands;  
 He who by grace the Word believes  
 The purchase of His blood receives.
- 7 All praise to You, O Christ, shall be  
 For absolution full and free,  
 In which You show Your richest grace;  
 From false indulgence guard our race.
- △ 8 Praise God the Father and the Son  
 And Holy Spirit, Three in One,  
 As was, is now, and so shall be  
 World without end, eternally!

## Sermon

Pastor Edward Killian

**Offering** *Collected after service in the back of the church.*

*Stand*

## Prayer

- P** In peace let us pray to the Lord:  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For this nation, for our cities and communities, and for the common welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord:  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For seasonable weather and for the fruitfulness of the earth, let us pray to the Lord:  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those who labor, for those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, let us pray to the Lord:  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For all those in need, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, let us pray to the Lord:  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the sick and dying and for all those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord:  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** Finally, for these and for all our needs of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord:  
**C** **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

### Collect of the Day

- P** Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

### Collect for the Word

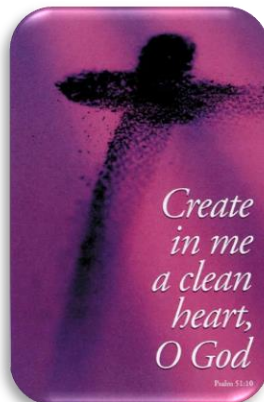
- P** Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

### Evening Prayer

- C** I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.

### Blessing

- P** Let us bless the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.
- P** The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✝ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve us.
- C** Amen.



# Hymn

# 427 In the Cross of Christ I Glory



1 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, Tow'r - ing  
2 When the woes of life o'er - take me, Hopes de -  
3 When the sun of bliss is beam - ing Light and  
4 Bane and bless - ing, pain and plea - sure By the



o'er the wrecks of time. All the light of sa - cred  
ceive, and fears an - noy, Nev - er shall the cross for -  
love up - on my way, From the cross the ra - diance  
cross are sanc - ti - fied; Peace is there that knows no



sto - ry Gath - ers round its head sub - lime.  
sake me; Lo, it glows with peace and joy.  
stream - ing Adds more lus - ter to the day.  
mea - sure, Joys that through all time a - bide.

Text: John Bowring, 1792–1872  
Tune: Ithamar Conkey, 1815–67  
Text and tune: Public domain

## From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee BWV 687

*J. S. Bach (1685-1750)*

### Acknowledgments

Service of Prayer and Preaching from Lutheran Service Book

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## Midweek Lenten Services

**First Midweek in Lent** – February 21<sup>st</sup> @ 7pm

**Second Midweek in Lent** – February 28<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm

**Third Midweek in Lent** – March 6<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm

**Fourth Midweek in Lent** – March 13<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm

**Fifth Midweek in Lent** – March 20<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm

Lenten suppers will be held before service in the Assembly room at 6pm.  
If you are interested in contributing to Lenten suppers, speak with Jill Killian!

## **Lectionary Summary for Ash Wednesday**

### ***Return to the Lord Your God, for He Has Reconciled You to Himself***

On Ash Wednesday, we come down from the mountain with Jesus and set our faces toward His cross and Passion in Jerusalem. We make our pilgrimage with Him by the way of repentance, and thus we return to the dying and rising of Holy Baptism. Christ Jesus, *“who knew no sin,”* became our sin, so that by His death we are released from sin and in His resurrection we *“become the righteousness of God”* (2 Cor. 5:21). Since God has thus reconciled the world to Himself in Christ, *“now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation”* (2 Cor. 6:2). He has provided the sacrificial Lamb, and He has left *“a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering”* in the Eucharist (Joel 2:14, 19). He summons us to return to Him with all our hearts, because He is *“gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love”* (Joel 2:13). Return to Him in faith and confidence, and so pray to Him as your Father; give to the needy from a heart of love; and fast for the sake of repentance (Matt. 6:3–4, 6, 17–18).

### **Verse For the Week**

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” **Hebrews 4:15**

### **A Snippet From 1517**

This cosmic collision between light and dark that will soon be upon us last took place 73 years ago in 1945! No, I don't speak of World War II, or of Axis and Allied nations. Rather, I speak of Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday (the beginning of Lent) falling on the same day; Wednesday, February 14, 2018...

...But in all seriousness, or at least more seriousness, this coming together of Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday is a strange thing! Now, I'm not going to suggest that the overlap of these two observances causes followers of Jesus—or anyone else for that matter—any kind of existential crisis. But I do want to ask this question: Is there a way to reconcile the overlap of these two celebrations?

One is a day of professed love and gifts to the beloved. The other is a day of ashes, repentance, and remembrance of the grave. Again: How exactly will these two observances occupy the same space on our calendars much less our hearts?

There may be more than one answer to this question, but I only know of one and I offer it to you now. In fact, this same answer is twice repeated in the book of Acts.

*God exalted [Jesus] at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins!* – [Acts 5:31](#)

And,

*When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life!”* – [Acts 11:18](#)

Did you catch all of that?

When it comes to the Jews ([Acts 5:31](#)) – those who were the recipients of God’s promises of a Savior for them and for all the nations, *repentance* is a gift that is *granted* through Jesus!

And these same Jews who were gifted with *repentance*, trust, and *forgiveness* in Jesus came to realize that for the Gentiles also, *repentance* is a gift that is *granted* to them through Jesus!

And we know more still; namely, that it is God the Father Who out of amazing fatherly love for a rebellious world *grants* this *repentance* leading to forgiveness through Jesus. And all of this He gives as complete and utter gift to all of us who are in need of it!

Repentance always precedes forgiveness, and so repentance does always go first. But gone, abolished, put away with, undone, and destroyed are any and all notions that *my repentance* unlocks, sets free, or earns God’s forgiveness. For that is the language of paychecks and wages and rewards. That is language set at odds with God and His Christ and His Word!

For God won’t have it any other way. He won’t wait around for you to never earn your way to Him. He won’t wait around for you to never scrape up the wage. He won’t wait around for you to never be worthy of reward.

Instead, in love God sent His Son Jesus to be our Savior and Lord. And what was the shape of His love? He went down into repentance with us and for us ([Mark 1:9-11](#)), even though He had no personal need to! And just as *from ashes we have come and to ashes we shall return* (in death), Jesus went on ahead into death on our behalf ([Mark 15:37](#)). And just as He promised that death would not hold Him ([Mark 8:31](#)), so He rose from the grave ([Mark 15:5-7](#)) with the effect that all who are baptized into Jesus are Baptized not only into His death, but also into His resurrected life ([Romans 6:3-4](#))!

This Jesus is sent out of God’s fatherly love for you! This very same Jesus grants new life eternal to you and all who trust in His gift of *forgiveness*. And this very same Jesus gives you one more gift that precedes even forgiveness and new life. And that gift is *repentance*! *God exalted [Jesus] at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins!* – [Acts 5:31](#)

And,

*When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life!”* – [Acts 11:18](#)

What sweet words these are! What sweet correction to our false notions of repentance! What wonderful news for the happy reconciliation and marriage of Valentines Day and Ash Wednesday! And what sweet redemption it is of that greeting card I’m still looking to find—the front of which will read, *What better way to say ‘I Love You’ than with the gift of ashes?*

*“The Gift of Ashes”, David Rufner, February 2018, 1517.org*