

seeking:

*Is this the fast
that I choose?*



Ash Wednesday

St. Andrew Lutheran Church

February 18, 2026

Welcome to St. Andrew!

At St. Andrew Lutheran Church, we strive to be a loving and welcoming community of faith. We are centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ, who calls us to reconciliation and wholeness in a world of alienation and brokenness.

All are welcome, without exception, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability, education, income, or family status.

All are welcome here to worship God, receive the sacraments, and share in fellowship, leadership, and service. We commit to treasuring one another's similarities and differences as one body in Christ.

We are called to provide a safe space in the community as we break down the barriers of isolation. We understand that being truly welcoming involves actively working against racism, heteronormativity, sexism, transphobia, ageism, ableism, classism, and other forces that seek to divide and oppress. We commit to continuing to discover what it means to be "Reconciling in Christ."

"Welcome one another therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."
-Romans 15:7

Orientation to the Service

This bulletin will guide you through the entire service. Starting on page 3, words printed in **bold** are for everyone to say aloud together. Instructions and information are printed in *italics*.

Hymns (songs) are found in the hymnals in the pew racks in front of your seat.

ELW = Evangelical Lutheran Worship (red hymnal)

ACS = All Creation Sings (blue hymnal)

Green-topped Welcome Cards are found in the pew racks in front of your seat. We would love for guests, visitors, and anyone in need of prayer or more information about the church to fill one out. Please place it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher after the service.

Children are welcome in worship! God put the wiggle in children, so please do not feel you have to shush or suppress those wiggles in God's house. All are welcome here! Consider sitting toward the front where it is easier for children to see and hear what is happening in the service. There are worship activity bags available for children on a shelf in the back of the sanctuary, and a staffed nursery is available for very young ones. Ask an usher if you need help locating it.

Restrooms can be found by exiting the back of the sanctuary and turning right. Walk straight until you pass the coffee bar, and you will find the women's and men's restrooms to your right. An all-gender, ADA-compliant restroom will be found to your left, near the door to the kitchen.

Online access to the bulletin and hymns: standrewlutheran.com/worship/worship-bulletins/

Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026 | 12:00 PM & 7:00 PM

*Is this the fast that I choose? As we practice seeking this Lent, what kind of fast will you choose?
How will you live your faith? How will you live the questions of your faith?*

PRELUDE

GATHERING

THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The congregation may stand.

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together at the edge of a new season.
We stand together on the cusp of something new.

Will we wade into self-reflection?
Will we invite honesty to dance?

Will we listen for God's invitation?
Will we seek deeper faith?

What kind of fast do we choose? What kind of faith will we build?
We gather together at the edge of a new season.

Listen, God is speaking.

GATHERING SONG

Remember That You Are Dust | ACS 919

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Let us pray together.

God, we want to hear your voice. Shout loudly; don't hold back. Move in our spirits the way you moved over the waters of creation. We are beginning a new season today, God, and we don't want to begin anything without you. So speak to us today – through silence, through scripture, through song. Speak to us as you spoke to the Israelites so many moons ago. Speak to us like a gentle breeze or a loud trumpet. We don't care how, we just long to hear your voice. So don't hold back. We are here. We are listening. Amen.

The congregation is seated.

POEM

“At the Start” by Rev. Sarah Speed

Is this the fast I choose?
Will I wake with the sun each morning?
Will I start with thank you?
Will I peel back the cage around my frame to let you in
or will I get too busy? Will my Bible collect dust on the shelf,
along with my journal, along with my sense of self,
or will I roll back the stone and wade in?

Every new season beckons something of us –
attention, beauty, the chance to create.
This season is no different.
So, like moths to the light, will we find our way toward God,
or will we hover, circling fake suns?

I am seeking something deeper.
I am kicking off my shoes.
I am starting this season on holy ground.

ACCLAMATION



Noth-ing in all cre - a - tion can sep - a - rate us from the love of God.



Noth-ing in all cre - a - tion can sep - a - rate us from the love of God.

READING

Isaiah 58:1-12

A reading from Isaiah.

¹Shout out; do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. ²Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they want God on their side. ³"Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers. ⁴You fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. ⁵Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? ⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin? ⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. ⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and the LORD will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, ¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. ¹¹The LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail. ¹²Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Pr. Allison Bengfort

The congregation may stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY

All Things of Dust to Dust Return | ACS 920

INVITATION TO LENT

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

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

Pause for silent confession.

Merciful God,

How many times in a day could we choose love?

How many times could we choose justice?

How many times could we speak kindly to ourselves?

How many times could we offer grace?

How many times, God? And how often do we miss it?

Forgive us for choosing the path you did not travel.

**Forgive us for hitching our horse to the world's measure of goodness,
instead of yours.**

**Return our hearts to you, and guide us continually,
even in the parched places.**

With gratitude we pray. Amen.

Family of faith, when a baby is learning to walk, the parents do not criticize the baby for falling. Instead, they celebrate every wobbly step. They applaud every hesitant stand. They whoop and holler when their child lands in their arms.

Surely the same must be true of God. Although we often lose our way and we often choose the wrong thing, I imagine God whoops and hollers with every step in God's direction.

So hear and believe the good news of the gospel: no matter how many times you fall, no matter how many times you choose the wrong path, God is waiting for you at the end with open arms. You are forgiven. You are invited. You belong.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

The congregation is seated.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*The congregation is invited forward to receive ashes and hear the words,
"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*All are invited to share a sign of peace with one another (handshake, hug, peace sign, etc.).
Placing your hands together in a praying position will signal to those around you that you prefer not to physically touch others.*

The congregation is seated.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Siblings in Christ, we believe in a God who journeys with us through the wilderness of our lives. As we offer our gifts today, we remember God's sustaining presence. I invite you to lift up an offering today as a sign of hope and an act of compassion that reflects the love of Christ.

Contributions to St. Andrew Lutheran Church may be placed in the offering plate or made online by scanning the QR code to the right. Thank you for your generosity!



OFFERING

The congregation may stand.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together.

God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is sure. Word and water, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Receive the gifts we bring, and nourish us to proclaim your abiding love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

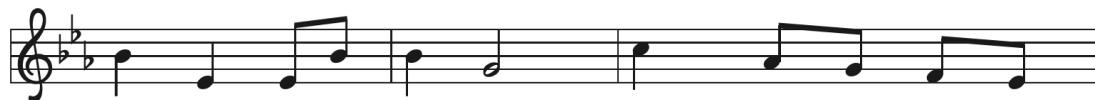
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and



God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your



glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the



Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

The congregation is seated.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

All are invited to commune without exception! At the direction of an usher, those wishing to commune may proceed down the center aisle. A piece of gluten-free bread will be placed in your hands. You may dip the bread in the wine (red chalice) or the grape juice (light-colored chalice), or you may choose to partake of bread only. If you prefer to receive a blessing, please cross your arms across your chest to indicate this preference. If you would like to receive communion in your seat, please alert an usher, and the elements will be brought to you.

COMMUNION SONG

Be known to us Lord Je-sus, in the break-ing of the bread. Ho -

-sa - na, ho - sa - na, ho - sa - na. Be known to us Lord

Je-sus, in the break-ing of the bread. Ho - sa - na, ho - sa - na, ho -

-sa - - - na, ho - sa - na

The congregation may stand.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together.

We thank you, O God, that you have strengthened our hearts through this feast of life and salvation. Shine the light of Christ on our path, that we may do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you, now and forever. Amen.

SENDING

GOD BLESSES US AND SENDS US IN MISSION TO THE WORLD.

BLESSING

As you leave this place, may God bless you with seeking.

Seek out the hungry. Seek the weary. Seek the good in every person you pass.

Seek out the hopeful. Seek the faithful. Seek God in each of us.

As you seek and as you wonder, may you find what you are looking for.

In the name of our loving God, † who is always seeking us.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Bless Now, O God, the Journey | ELW 326

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you in your seeking.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Serving in Worship at 12:00 PM

Presiding Minister: Pr. Allison Bengfort
Preacher: Pr. Allison Bengfort
Assisting Minister:
Altar Guild: Susan Werner Reiser

Musicians: Karl Gustafson, organ;
John Gladen, guitar
Zoom Host: Marlan Bell

Serving in Worship at 7:00 PM

Presiding Minister: Pr. Allison Bengfort
Preacher: Pr. Allison Bengfort
Assisting Minister:
Altar Guild: Susan Werner Reiser
Lector: Kim Taylor-Blakemore

Musicians: Karl Gustafson, organ;
John Gladen, guitar
Tech Team: Rick LeRoy
Welcome Team: Kim Taylor-Blakemore
Worship Coordinator: Liz Hardy
Zoom Host: Marlan Bell

*“Remember That You Are Dust,” “All Things of Dust to Dust Return,” “Restore in Us, O God,”
and “Bless Now, O God, the Journey,” are used with permission from One License.*

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