



Bethlehem Lutheran Church & Early Childhood Center



Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

7:00 PM

Welcome to Bethlehem!

We hope you feel a warm welcome here at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Please visit our website at www.blcenc.org for more information about the congregation. If you are visiting with us, please fill out an information card and place it in the offering basket so we can stay connected.

CHILDREN

All children are welcome in the sanctuary for worship at Bethlehem. If you prefer, there is a comfort room at the back of the sanctuary. Busy bags are available in the narthex. After Children's Time at our **10:30 AM** service children ages 3 years – 6th grade may either attend our Learning Circle program or remain with you.

COMMUNION

We practice **open communion**, meaning all are welcome to participate. We commune by intinction where the pastor dips the bread into a divided chalice with white wine or red grape juice. There is a gluten-free station on the left side of the sanctuary. We are happy to bring communion to individuals with limited mobility.

PARTICIPATION & ACCESSIBILITY

The different movements that happen during worship (sitting, standing, making the sign of the cross) are all optional; please engage as you are comfortable or able. Hearing assistance devices are located at the back of the sanctuary and large-print bulletins are available in the narthex. If you, or someone you know, identify as neurodivergent and have questions about how to participate in worship or in one of our church ministries, please feel free to ask either the pastors or the church office for help.

PRAYER

In addition to the pastors, our Stephen Ministers are always available to pray with you about whatever is on your heart this day. Please look for the folks wearing a blue name tag with the Stephen Ministry logo. Healing prayer stations are available during communion on the second Sunday of each month.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'Now Is the Time of Grace' - Text and Tune: Marty Haugen, ©2009 Augsburg Fortress Publishers. **"Bless Now, O God, the Journey"** - Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, ©1991 GIA Publications, Inc.; Tune LLANGLOFFAN: Welsh tune, 19th cen., Public Domain. **"Return to God"** - Text and Tune: Marty Haugen, ©1990, 1991 GIA Publications, Inc. .
"Ashes" - Text and Tune: Tom Conry, ©1978 Oregon Catholic Press. For copyrighted selections, all rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net License No. A-706214. Other selections are in the Public Domain. Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License with license #A-706214.
Photo Credit: Purchased from Shutterstock.com

GATHERING

Lent begins with a solemn call to repentance, fasting, and contemplation as we begin our journey toward Easter. During Lent the people of God reflect on our humanity, the promise of baptism, and our walk of faith. The sign of ashes reminds us of our humanity, mortality, and frailty. By engaging in genuine repentance, we realize that what seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are covered again, in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our foreheads, we wait for the renewal, the redemption and the promise, that awaits us in the Easter feast yet to come.

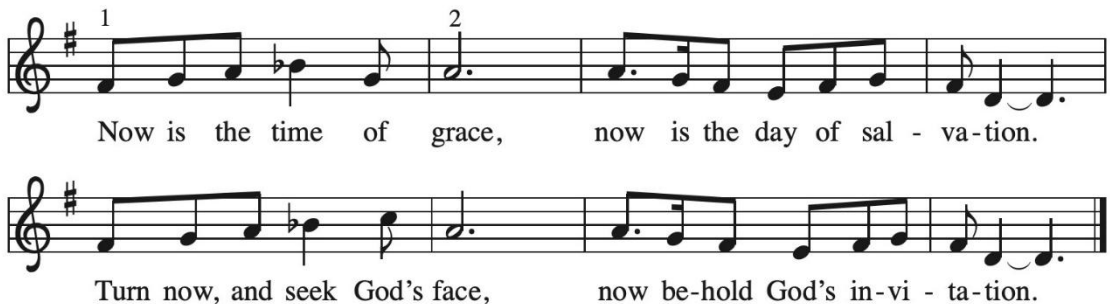
PRELUDE

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Now Is the Time of Grace – ACS 918

Choir sings verses, Congregation sings refrain



GREETING

L: 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.

GATHERING HYMN

Bless Now, O God, the Journey – ELW 326



1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,
2 Bless so - journ-ers and pil - grims who share this wind-ing way;
3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.



the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.
your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus-tains the day.
We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow,



The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun-tain round,
We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;
but wait-ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.



then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.
to - geth - er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.
Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

PRAYER OF THE NIGHT

L: Let us pray ... Gracious God

C: 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. 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. Amen.

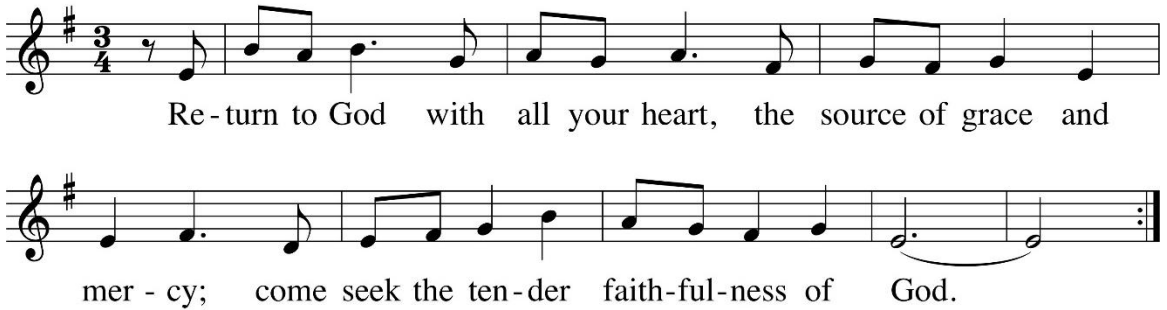
WORD

SUNG SCRIPTURE

Psalm 51 – Good News Singers

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Return to God – GC 410



Re - turn to God with all your heart, the source of grace and
mer - cy; come seek the ten - der faith - ful - ness of God.

The musical notation is written on two staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is simple and melismatic, with the lyrics written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics 'Re - turn to God with all your heart, the source of grace and' and the second staff contains 'mer - cy; come seek the ten - der faith - ful - ness of God.' The melody ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

R: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

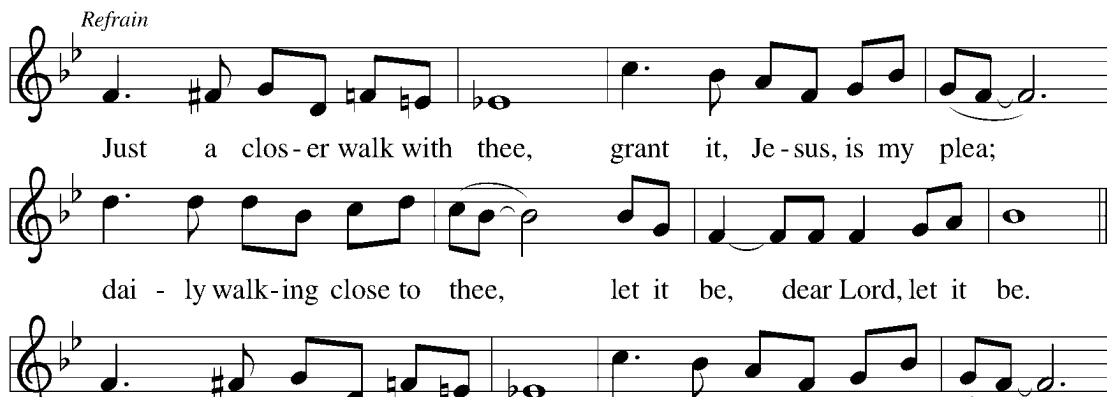
Pastor Laura Ziehl

HYMN OF THE DAY

Just a Closer Walk with Thee – ELW 697

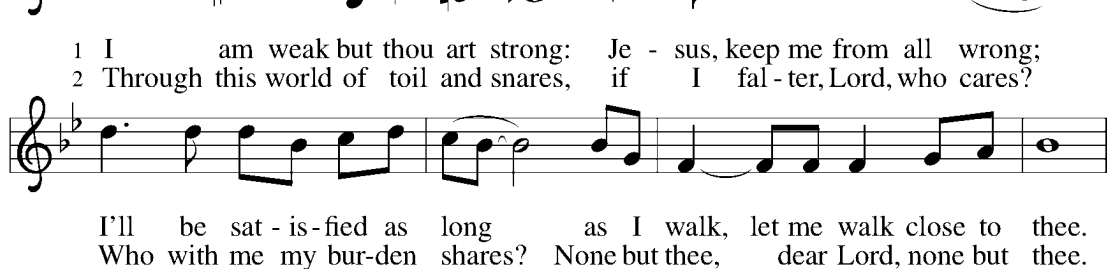
Refrain, Verse 1, Verse 2, Refrain

Refrain



Just a clos-er walk with thee, grant it, Je-sus, is my plea;
dai - ly walk-ing close to thee, let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

1 I am weak but thou art strong: Je - sus, keep me from all wrong;
2 Through this world of toil and snares, if I fal - ter, Lord, who cares?



I'll be sat - is - fied as long as I walk, let me walk close to thee.
Who with me my bur - den shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.

INVITATION TO LENT

CONFESSION OF SIN & IMPOSITION OF ASHES

L: Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo.

C: Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open us to a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

L: As we place now these ashes on our foreheads, remind us that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Remind us that we are loved by you, and to your love we shall return.

Pause for the imposition of ashes

L: We call to you, great God of covenant and promise,

C: Create in us a clean heart, O God. Put a new and right spirit within us. Cast us not away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from us, restore to us the joy of your salvation and sustain in us a willing spirit.

L: In the name of Jesus, your sins are forgiven this night. In the shape of the cross, your life is made new. You are freed from all that holds you and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love for the journey, comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

MEAL

GREAT THANKSGIVING

L: The Lord be with you,

C: **And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts,

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,

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

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD’S PRAYER

ELW pg. 112

**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.**

COMMUNION HYMN

Abide with Me – ELW 629



1 A - bidē with me, fast falls the e - ven - tide.
 2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;
 3 I need thy pres - ence ev - 'ry pass - ing hour;
 4 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
 5 Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes,



The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bidē.
 earth's joys grow dim, its glo - ries pass a - way;
 what but thy grace can foil the tempt - er's pow'r?
 ills have no weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness.
 shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;



When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,
 change and de - cay in all a - round I see;
 Who like thy - self my guide and stay can be?
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy vic - to - ry?
 heav'n's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain shad - ows flee;



help of the help - less, oh, a - bidē with me.
 O thou who chang - est not, a - bidē with me.
 Through cloud and sun - shine, oh, a - bidē with me.
 I tri - umph still, if thou a - bidē with me!
 in life, in death, O Lord, a - bidē with me.

SENDING

BENEDICTION

L: 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.

SENDING HYMN

Ashes – GC 852

1. We rise a - gain from ash - es, from the
 2. We of - fer you our fail - ures, we
 3. Then rise a - gain from ash - es, let

good we've failed to do. We rise a - gain from
 of - fer you at - tempts, The gifts not ful - ly
 heal - ing come to pain, Though spring has turned to

ash - es, to cre - ate our - selves a - new. If
 giv - en, the dreams not ful - ly dreamt. Give our
 win - ter, and sun - shine turned to rain. The

all our world is ash - es, then
 stum - bl - ings di - rec - tion, give our
 rain we'll use for grow - ing, and cre -

must our lives be true, An of - fer - ing of
 vi - sions wid - er view, An of - fer - ing of
 ate the world a - new From an of - fer - ing of

ash - es, an of - fer - ing to you.
 ash - es, an of - fer - ing to you.
 ash - es, an of - fer - ing to you.

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace, remember that you are dust.

C: Thanks be to God.

All Are Welcome!

We live in a diverse world. We are hurting, broken and heavy hearted. We are loving, joyous, and above all, we are welcoming. Regardless of the color of your skin, or the color of your hair; regardless of your gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, relationship status, or political affiliation, you are welcome here. We honor indigenous people and are committed to the work of anti-racism and the stewardship of the creation.

If you are Buddhist, Roman Catholic, agnostic, Muslim, Jewish, seeking, have never set foot in a church, or are a life long Lutheran; you have a place here. If you own, rent, or have nothing at all; you are welcome here. If you are neurodivergent, fully abled, disabled, or a person of differing abilities; if you have regrets, fears, addictions, or afflictions; you have a place here.

All who are wise and all who are confused, all who have found love and all who have lost it, all who celebrate this welcome statement and all who fear it - are welcome here.

Come as you are and be celebrated for who you are. Your place is here. Bethlehem Lutheran is an All are Welcome church.



Reconciling in Christ



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Electronic Giving at Bethlehem

Offering gifts can be made electronically on our website **www.blcenc.org** under the contribute tab, or by scanning this QR code. There are options for one-time donations, recurring gifts, and special offerings. **No account is needed to donate on our website.**



You can also use the **Vanco Mobile App**. Simply download it from your app store, and search "Bethlehem Lutheran Church Encinitas" by name (there is no invite code). If you already have an account from our website, the same login information will work. If not, please sign up with a new account. **Thank You for Supporting Bethlehem!**



Bethlehem_Lutheran_Encinitas



Facebook.com/BethlehemLutheranEncinitas/

Follow us on
social media!