



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH & PRESCHOOL

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Worship Services

10:30am & 4:30pm

Bible Class 9am, Sunday School 10:30am

For those of you who joined us for Ash Wednesday this is a refresher. For those of you who could not be there this is how we started our Lenten journey:

Ash Wednesday is a mess. There is ash and dust everywhere. And it's also strange. We all come here clean and relatively put together. We come and we hear a messy and painful word from Genesis 3: "For you are dust and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). We gather together to hear that we will one day die and give our bodies back to the earth. We hear that we are sinners and that our sin has brought the curse of death upon us. This message makes a mess of our arrogance and pride. And this message is accompanied with a mess of ashes.

In Luke 7:36 – 8:3, we hear about a woman who was a mess. She may not have had a mess of ashes on her forehead, but her life was a mess and she had the tears prove it. This woman—we are not even given her name—was marked by her sin. It defined her, described her and determined her standing within the neighborhood. Everybody knew her by the mess of her sin.

When she walked into a room, everybody would say: "...she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39). Everybody, but Jesus. Luke tells us that Jesus was dining in the house of a Jewish leader. It was the custom in that culture to leave the door to the house open when having a party. People from the city were allowed to enter and be part of the celebration—sort of. Uninvited guests did not have a seat at the table, they were not supposed to interact with the guests of honor and they could only eat the scraps from the table. And, so, this sinful woman entered the dinner party of this Jewish leader and began to wash the feet of Jesus. Moved by reverence for Jesus, this woman used her tears for water and her hair for a towel. Though this woman was a mess, she took her mess to the feet of Jesus.

This was a problem for the host of the party. The host of the banquet, Simon the Pharisee, said, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39). In other words, sinners are not supposed to touch Jesus, come near him or cry at his feet. Simon thought that those who are a mess cannot be friends with Jesus. Jesus thought otherwise.

Jesus responded to his host's critique by telling a story about two debtors and a moneylender. One of the debtors owed five hundred denarii and the other owed fifty denarii. In a moment of unimaginable mercy, the moneylender forgave the debts of both. Jesus then asked his host: "Now which of them will love him more?" (Luke 7:42). The host correctly answered: clearly the one with the greater debt had a greater reason to celebrate this act of mercy. The one with a bigger mess on his hands had more reason to rejoice when the debts were paid.

Then, moving from the parable to the person weeping next to him, Jesus showed what a forgiver he is as he said, "Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48). Jesus befriended this

friendless woman. Jesus knew her sins and griefs. Jesus knew her trials and temptations. Jesus knew that she was cumbered with a load of care. So, what did Jesus do? Jesus was a friend to her. Jesus empathized with her enough to acknowledge her. When nobody else cared to even see her, Jesus was her friend.

But she is not the only person in this story who needed a friend. Nor was she the only person in this story whose life was a mess. Simon the Pharisee had his own spiritual mess going on. Simon had dismissed this woman as a sinner. He was appalled that Jesus would let her touch him or even come near him. Clearly, Simon assumed the opposite about himself: she is a sinner, but I am not. She's a mess, but I am spiritually put together. She needs to be cleansed, but I am already clean. Yet, in these assumptions, Simon reveals that he is a spiritual mess. Simon was blinded by his own self-righteousness. Simon was as much of a mess as this unnamed sinful woman.

Jesus came for people who are a mess. Jesus came for this unnamed sinful woman. Jesus came for Simon the Pharisee. And Jesus came for you and me. Jesus sees you just like he saw that hurting woman sobbing on the floor. Jesus sees you just like he saw through Simon's self-deception and self-righteousness. Jesus sees you when you feel like you are walking through the wilderness of life. Jesus sees you when you are alone, despairing and ready to give up. Not only does Jesus see you—he befriends you. What a forgiver we have in Jesus!

Rather than being repulsed by the mess of our sin, Jesus repaid our debts by his blood shed on the cross. Though it was messy, horrific and unimaginably painful, Jesus removed the mess of our sin through the cross and the empty tomb. He has paid off the debt of your sins by carrying them to the cross. And your friend Jesus forgives you again and again, even though this forgiveness is not deserved. You are forgiven. Your sins are no more. You are covered in the grace of Jesus. And like he said to that weeping woman, Jesus now says to you: "Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48).

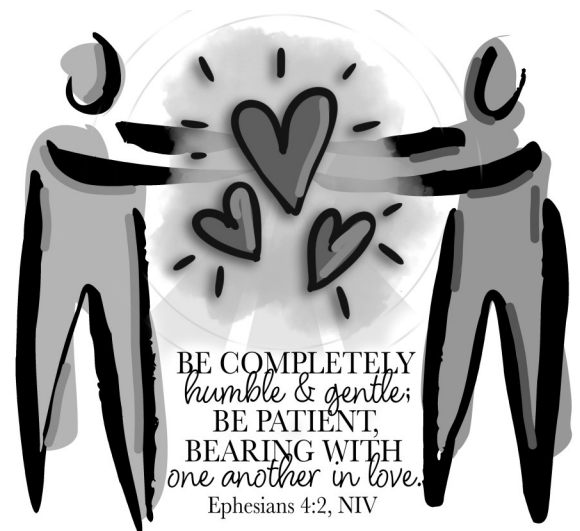
Ash Wednesday is a mess. I hope you can look in the mirror and see how much of a mess you are. Yes, it's true that you are a mess. Yes, it's true that sin makes a mess of everything—this world, our relationships and us. It is hard to imagine that anyone would want to befriend this mess. But what a friend we have in Jesus! What a forgiver we have in Jesus! "Jesus forgives this mess." We are a mess. But Jesus came into this mess and Jesus came for this mess. What a forgiver we have in Jesus! What a friend we have in Jesus! Peace to you on your Lenten journey. *Pastor*

Preschool News

February was all about friendship. All year long we have been making such great friends and it was a blast to celebrate those friendships! We had a wonderful friendship party with lots of Valentine's to share with everyone.

There were some really cold days in February and we got to explore ice and frost out on the playground.

We are grateful for the time together this year. It is so sweet to watch the classes build friendships and get to be a part of their learning experience!



Faith That Blooms Anew



“Why are you anxious?” asked our Lord. Then He said, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” (Matthew 6:28–29, NIV)

Jesus' words remind us that just as God clothes the lilies of the field in beauty and splendor, he also provides faithfully for his people. The same Creator who tends to the flowers of spring cares for every detail of our lives.

People of faith come to see that truth unfold year after year — in the budding trees, the soft blossoms, and the steady return of color after winter's gray. God's reliability is woven into creation itself.

As poet Adeline Whitney once wrote:
*God does not send strange flowers every year,
 When the Spring wind blows o'er the pleasant places,
 The same dear things lift up the same fair faces,
 The violet is here.*

Each spring, those familiar blooms whisper the same promise: God is faithful still.



By the end of March we will have been meeting together for one year. It is interesting to note that including this March we will have profiled 80 hymns.


Even more interesting is that we have looked up and read and had lots of discussions on 560 Bible passages. Some are single verses but more are several verses to have a clearer understanding. Also, this is a low estimate of the number of scripture passages.

From my view I see how we have enriched our lives and become a blessing to each other on our journey. We are so thankful to our Lord who has opened our hearts and minds to grow in Him.

Join us Wednesdays at 10am at Karen's house.

Servants	March 1	March 8	March 15	March 22	March 29
ACOLYTES	Caeden	Caeden	Caeden	Caeden	Caeden
ALTAR COMMITTEE	Ronna & Ann	Ronna & Ann	Ronna & Ann	Ronna & Ann	Ronna & Ann
SCRIPTURE READERS	Sandie Miller	Lenore Onyon	Joan Gregory	Caeden	Dan Persse
COMMUNION ASST.	Jon Huffman		Dennis Wildermuth		Dave Magelssen
PIANIST	Janet Mehus	Janet Mehus	Janet Mehus	Janet Mehus	Janet Mehus
ORGANIST	Brent Johnson	Brent Johnson	Brent Johnson	Brent Johnson	Brent Johnson
USHERS	Caeden Jim Higby	Dick Johnson	Jon Huffman Dan Persse	Bruce Shelton	Bruce Shelton Jim Higby
SLIDES	Steve Roe	Steve Galbraith	Caeden	Steve Roe	Steve Galbraith

MARCH 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00 Bible Study 10:30 Worship w. Communion & Sunday School	2	3	4 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	5 Men's Club 4:30pm	6	7
8 Daylight Savings Begins 9:00 Bible Study 10:30 Worship & Sunday School	9 Ladies' Bible Study 6:30pm	10	11 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	12	13	14
15 9:00 Bible Study 10:30 Worship w. Communion & Sunday School Family Dinner	16	17 	18 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	19 Men's Club 4:30pm	20	21
22 9:00 Bible Study 10:30 Worship & Sunday School	23 Ladies' Bible Study 6:30pm	24	25 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	26	27	28
29 Palm Sunday 9:00 Bible Study 10:30 Worship w. Communion & Sunday School	30	31	1	2 Maundy Thursday 7pm	3 Good Friday 7pm	4

BIRTHDAYS

2 Rochelle Halldorson	10 Mike Halldorson	24 Mike Hoffman
Gracie Renskers	11 Shirley Pukaluk	27 Tamera (Holleman) Mastropalo
Owen Liebert	13 David Hrutfiord	Justin Bleazard
Mickaylah Tevelde	Steven Hrutfiord	28 Leona Olason
3 Susan Allen	15 Robert Onyon	29 Jeremy Hinchey
Caitlin Phelps-McDonald	17 Rosetta Johnson	30 Jodi (Robbins) Beveridge
4 Kristin Nawman	18 Courtney Carleton	31 Elizabeth Liebert
5 Mardella Montgomery	Susie Hollarn	Nicki Cortez
8 Jared Liebert	19 Marsha Wahl	
Holly Johnson	21 Caeden Chambers	
9 Karmen Terris		

ANNIVERSARIES

23 Max & Josie Shelton