



**February 18, 2026**  
*Ash Wednesday*  
*6:00pm Service*

**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Pastor Sara Stall-Ryan**  
**9:00 a.m. Worship**  
**P.O. Box 202**  
**183 William Street**  
**Portland, CT 06480**  
**860-342-2860**  
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# YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

*Regular font: Worship Leader; Bold font: Congregation*

*Time for meditation in preparation for worship.*

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

*Please stand*

**GATHERING HYMN** “Chief of Sinners Though I Be” **ELW 609**

### GREETING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. 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, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING

**Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

<sup>1</sup> Blow the trumpet in Zion;

    sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,

    for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—

<sup>2</sup> a day of darkness and gloom,

    a day of clouds and thick darkness!

Like blackness spread upon the mountains,

    a great and powerful army comes;

their like has never been from of old,

    nor will be again after them

    in ages to come.

<sup>12</sup> Yet even now, says the LORD,

return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;  
<sup>13</sup> rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD your God,  
for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,  
and relenting from punishment.

<sup>14</sup> Who knows whether he will not turn and relent  
and leave a blessing behind him,  
a grain offering and a drink offering  
for the LORD your God?

<sup>15</sup> Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
consecrate a fast;  
call a solemn assembly;  
<sup>16</sup> gather the people.

Consecrate the congregation;  
assemble the aged;  
gather the children,  
even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room  
and the bride her canopy.

<sup>17</sup> Between the vestibule and the altar,  
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.

Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD,  
and do not make your heritage a mockery,  
a byword among the nations.

Why should it be said among the peoples,  
"Where is their God?" "

Word of God. Word of Life.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

**Psalm 51:1-17**

**SUNG RESPONSE** "Create In Me a Clean Heart" **ELW 186**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your <sup>1</sup> steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out <sup>1</sup> my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through <sup>1</sup> from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me <sup>1</sup> from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know <sup>1</sup> my offenses,

and my sin is ev-<sup>l</sup>er before me.

**<sup>4</sup>Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil<sup>l</sup> in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right<sup>l</sup> in your judgment.**

*“Create In Me a Clean Heart”*

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born<sup>l</sup> steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my<sup>l</sup> mother’s womb.

**<sup>6</sup>Indeed, you delight in truth<sup>l</sup> deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom<sup>l</sup> deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I<sup>l</sup> shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be pur-<sup>l</sup>er than snow.

**<sup>8</sup>Let me hear<sup>l</sup> joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken<sup>l</sup> may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face<sup>l</sup> from my sins,  
and blot out<sup>l</sup> all my wickedness.

*“Create In Me a Clean Heart”*

**<sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean<sup>l</sup> heart, O God,  
and renew a right spir-<sup>l</sup>it within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away<sup>l</sup> from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spir-<sup>l</sup>it from me.

**<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of<sup>l</sup> your salvation  
and sustain me with your boun-<sup>l</sup>tiful Spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways<sup>l</sup> to offenders,  
and sinners shall be re-<sup>l</sup>stored to you.

*“Create In Me a Clean Heart”*

**<sup>14</sup>Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of<sup>l</sup> my salvation,  
and my tongue shall sing<sup>l</sup> of your righteousness.**

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, o-<sup>l</sup>pen my lips,  
and my mouth shall pro-<sup>l</sup>claim your praise.

**<sup>16</sup>For you take no delight in sacrifice, or<sup>l</sup> I would give it.  
You are not pleased<sup>l</sup> with burnt offering.**

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a<sup>l</sup> troubled spirit;  
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will<sup>l</sup> not despise.

*“Create In Me a Clean Heart”*

**SECOND READING**

**2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10**

<sup>20b</sup> We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup> As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup> For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! <sup>3</sup> We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup> but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup> beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup> by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup> truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup> in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup> as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup> as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

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**GOSPEL READING**

**Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

The gospel according to Matthew, the 6th chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup> So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup> But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup> And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that

they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever 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 whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not 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 store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ**

## **HYMN**

*Please be seated*

## **PASTORAL MESSAGE**

*Pastor Sara Stall-Ryan*

*One minute of silence is kept for reflection.*

*Please stand*

## **HYMN OF THE DAY “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” ELW 254**

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

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

*The assembly kneels or sits. Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.*

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:  
Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For failing to recognize your coming reign,  
and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,  
and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For disregarding voices from the margin,  
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world:  
Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,  
and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life:  
Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.

Through faith, the free gift of God,

you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead  
dwells in you,

pours God's love into your hearts,

and gives you life and peace.

**Amen.**

## **IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

*People may come forward to receive ashes. The minister marks a cross of ashes on the forehead of each person, with the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return," the words a reminder that we are mortals, created, not Creator. In the ancient world, placing ashes on one's head was a sign of mourning and repentance. We continue this tradition today with these ashes. Once you have received ashes, you are invited to return to your seats to kneel or sit, to remain in silent prayer and meditation.*

*Hymn during the imposition of ashes:*

“Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”

ELW 608

*Once all who desire to have received ashes:*

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

**that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

**bring us with all your saints to the joy of us resurrection.**

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

**Amen.**

## MEAL

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Reconciled by God’s mercy and sustained by God’s presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*A brief silence.*

Guide your church, O God. Accompany all Christians in this season of repentance, and renew our faith in the riches of grace you give to us in baptism. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heal this earth, O God. Satisfy the needs of every parched place, every diverse ecosystem, every suffering creature. Though all return to dust, grant beauty and purpose to each living thing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Restore the nations, O God. Let your healing spring up quickly across the world (places may be named). Give all in authority the will to loose the bonds of injustice and let any who are oppressed go free. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Deliver your people, O God. Comfort any whose hearts are rent by grief, uphold any who are sick, bring food to those who hunger, and give housing to all without shelter. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Bless this assembly, O God. Reconcile us to one another and to you. Strengthen our resolve to fast from evil, open our hands in sharing, and quicken our prayer. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Hold us forever, O God. We thank you for all who now know their treasure in heaven, and for (Martin Luther and) all who on earth proclaimed your abounding, steadfast love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY HYMN**    “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

**ELW 803**

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus’ name.

**Amen.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **LORD’S PRAYER** *(spoken)*

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**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.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come to the table. Feast on God’s goodness and mercy.

*Please come forward to receive communion.*

**LAMB OF GOD**

**pg. 154**

**COMMUNION HYMN**      “Just as I Am”      **ELW 592**

**POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

God of our salvation,  
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,  
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.  
Through the body and blood of your Son,  
may we become Christ’s body in the world,  
bearing witness to your love for all creation,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING**

**BLESSING**

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:  
God, who calls all things into existence,  
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,  
and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,  
+ bless you now and always. **Amen.**

**HYMN**      “The Glory of These Forty Days”      **ELW 320**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Believe the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

**Lenten Calendar**



On **Wednesdays during Lent** we begin The Soup and Substance program together with Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton at **6:00 p.m.**

**Dates are:**

- February 25 at Zion**
- March 4 at Bethlehem**
- March 11 at Zion**
- March 18 at Bethlehem**
- March 25 at Zion**

## Prayer List

<b>For Health:</b>	Marjorie F	Lois B	Jamie S-R
Joyce G	Jessica A	Loee M	Don R
Bill B	Charlotte D	Charline C	Family of
Cathy L	Jonathan A	Alexis R	Fran C
Marion B	Pauline N	Malynda A	<b>For Safety:</b>
Lily V	Curt R	Family of	Andrew C
Holly N	Matthew S	Harry W	Todd S
Dylan G	Joan A	Annamaria T	Michael C
Lisa A	Diane E	Brenda B	Tyler G
Aiden J	Dick C	Lee T	Erik B
Helen A	Karen R	Judi E	Justin Earl B
Matthew A	Stacey T	Michael L	Evan G
Bud J	Pat J	Liam S	David P

### SERVING TODAY

Sandra Chiasson - Lector  
Donna Berndtson - Worship Assistant  
Volunteers - Ushers/Greeters  
Donna Marlow - Altar Guild  
Sarah Dzialo - Organist



**Lenten Series** with **Bishop Pippo** on the ELCA's Faith and Civic Life Social Statement (Thursdays in Lent--2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19-- at 7PM)  
Please join us for this online discussion on Thursdays in Lent. Amidst the turmoil we experience in our society today, the guidance of this social statement is all the more important for how Christians (and Lutheran Christians!) engage the world in faith. You can register for the program here: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeZZm9Yk45Fx-iQfDcIzCrr\\_P7a7X0EVUFvttPR-CwcERrYDg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeZZm9Yk45Fx-iQfDcIzCrr_P7a7X0EVUFvttPR-CwcERrYDg/viewform)

**To register without having to type in all these letters and numbers, see Zion Happenings (the email newsletter that Michelle sends) where you will be able to click a link.**



## **Alms Giving**

Through alms giving, we also can draw closer to God during Lent. Being charitable to others helps us look beyond ourselves. By helping those in need, we are acting in faith and giving freely of our love, as the Lord does with us.

Beginning February 22, we will be collecting items for the Portland Food Bank on the following schedule:

February 22 - Shampoo, Conditioner

March 1 - Soap, Bodywash

March 8 - Paper goods - Toilet paper, paper towels, tissues,  
napkins

March 15 - Toothpaste, toothbrushes mouthwash, dental floss

March 22 - Deodorant, feminine products

March 29 - shaving cream, hand lotion, body lotion

**Please place items in the shopping cart in the Narthex.**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

As members of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, we exist to honor and proclaim the life of Jesus Christ through our words, actions and deeds.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church shall be a prominent magnet in the community to draw people to a new life in Jesus Christ.

Council Members: President - Kathy Richards, Vice President - Paula Brown, Secretary - Barbara Helming, Financial Secretary - Rick Borg, Other Members - Beth Keser, Bob Redman Peter Willse, Christine Kelsey, Kate Schneider

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