

# **ASH WEDNESDAY EUCHARIST**

**February 18, 2026**

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church**

**142 Market Street, Williamsport, PA 17701**

**[stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org)**

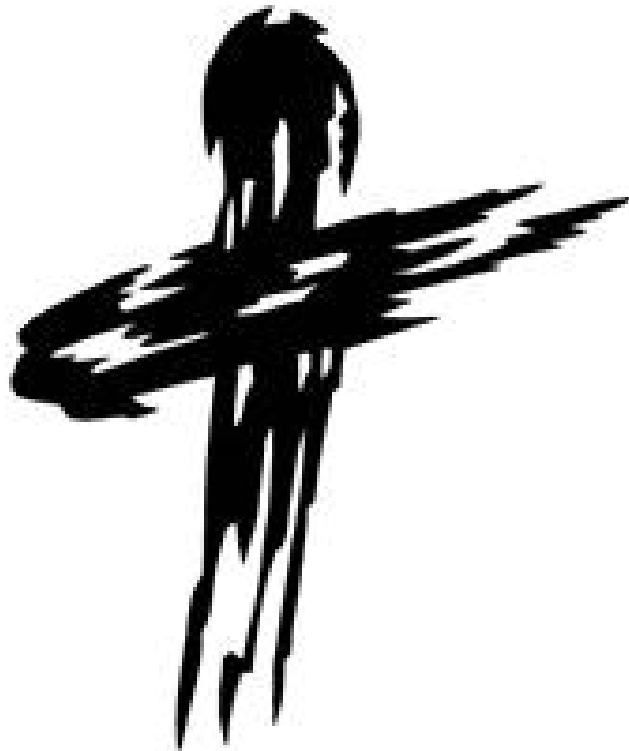
**Office (570-323-4619) Fax (570-323-2452)**

**Rev. Brian D. Vasey, Pastor**

**[bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org)**

***Welcome to Saint Mark's!***

***This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here. Join us as we seek "To know Christ and to make Christ known."***



**Please Note:**

**Hand sanitizer is available for your use; face masks are optional; offerings may be received by way of offering plates as you enter or leave.**

**An Order for Holy Communion for Ash Wednesday**

*A guide to hymnal use: LBW, Green Book; WOV, Blue Book*

*\*Please stand as you are able.*

**INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S WORSHIP**

*On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.*

*On this day, we begin our time together in silence. As you enter, please do so as quietly and reverently as possible. If you must speak please do so in a whisper. Allow your speech to be that of a prayer.*

**WELCOME/ANNOUNCING THE DAY/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\*HYMN                      Savior, When in Dust to You                      LBW, “Green,” 91**

## Savior, When in Dust to You



1 Sav-ior, when in dust to you low we bow in hom-age due;  
2 By your help-less in-fant years, by your life of want and tears,  
3 By your hour of dire de-spair, by your ag-o-ny of prayer,  
4 By your deep ex-pir-ing groan, by the sad se-pul-chral stone,



when, re-pen-tant, to the skies scarce we lift our weep-ing eyes;  
by your days of deep dis-tress in the sav-age wil-der-ness,  
by the cross, the nail, the thorn, pierc-ing spear, and tor-turing scorn,  
by the vault whose dark a-bode held in vain the ris-ing God,



oh, by all your pains and woe suf-fered once for us be-low,  
by the dread, mys-te-rious hour of the in-sult-ing tempt-er's pow'r,  
by the gloom that veiled the skies o'er the dread-ful sac-ri-fice,  
oh, from earth to heav'n re-stored, might-y, re-as-cend-ed Lord,



bend-ing from your throne on high, hear our pen-i-ten-tial cry!  
turn, oh, turn a fa-v'ring eye; hear our pen-i-ten-tial cry!  
lis-ten to our hum-ble sigh; hear our pen-i-ten-tial cry!  
bend-ing from your throne on high, hear our pen-i-ten-tial cry!

### \*THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Gracious God, 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, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**THE 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>2a</sup> 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, and abounding in steadfast love,  
    and relents from punishing.

<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;  
    sanctify a fast;  
    call a solemn assembly;  
    <sup>16</sup>gather the people.  
Sanctify 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?’ ”  
The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM 51**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.  
<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,**  
**and cleanse me | from my sin.**  
<sup>3</sup>For I know | my offenses,  
and my sin is ev- | er before me.  
<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;**  
**so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment.**  
<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my | mother’s womb.  
<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,**  
**and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**  
<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.  
<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear | joy and gladness;**  
**that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**  
<sup>9</sup>Hide your face | from my sins,  
and blot out | all my wickedness.  
<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,**  
**and renew a right spir- | it within me.**  
<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away | from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.  
<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation**  
**and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.**  
<sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways | to offenders,  
and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.  
<sup>14</sup>**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,**  
**and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**  
<sup>15</sup>O Lord, o- | pen my lips,  
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.  
<sup>16</sup>**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.**  
**You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**  
<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;  
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise.

## **THE SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10**

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

6:1 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2 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! 3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **\*THE GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 1 “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.

2 “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. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5 “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. 6 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.

16 “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. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 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.

19“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; 20but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

## THE SERMON

**\*HYMN**

**Just As I Am**

**LBW, “Green,” 296**

### Just As I Am, without One Plea



- 1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me,
- 2 Just as I am, and wait - ing not to rid my soul of one dark blot,
- 3 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y\_a con - flict, man - y\_a doubt,
- 4 Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind; sight, rich - es, heal - ing of the mind,



and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,  
to thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.  
fight-ings and fears with - in, with - out,  
yea, all I need in thee to find,

- 5 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,  
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
because thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 6 Just as I am; thy love unknown  
has broken ev'ry barrier down;  
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789–1871

Music: WOODWORTH, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

## **\*INVITATION TO LENT**

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

## **CONFESSION OF SIN**

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

*Kneel/Stand*

Most holy and merciful God,

**we confess to you and to one another,  
and before the whole company of heaven,  
that we have sinned by our fault,  
by our own fault,  
by our own most grievous fault,  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**



We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

**Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

*The congregation is seated.*

## **IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.

May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*People may come forward to receive the ashes with the following exchange:*

Remember that you are dust and to dust shall return.

**Amen.**

*After those who desire ashes have received them, the pastor continues.*

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

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

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

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

#### **\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*After each petition: Hear us, O God/Your mercy is great.*

#### **\*THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*Words and gestures of peace are shared.*

#### **\*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

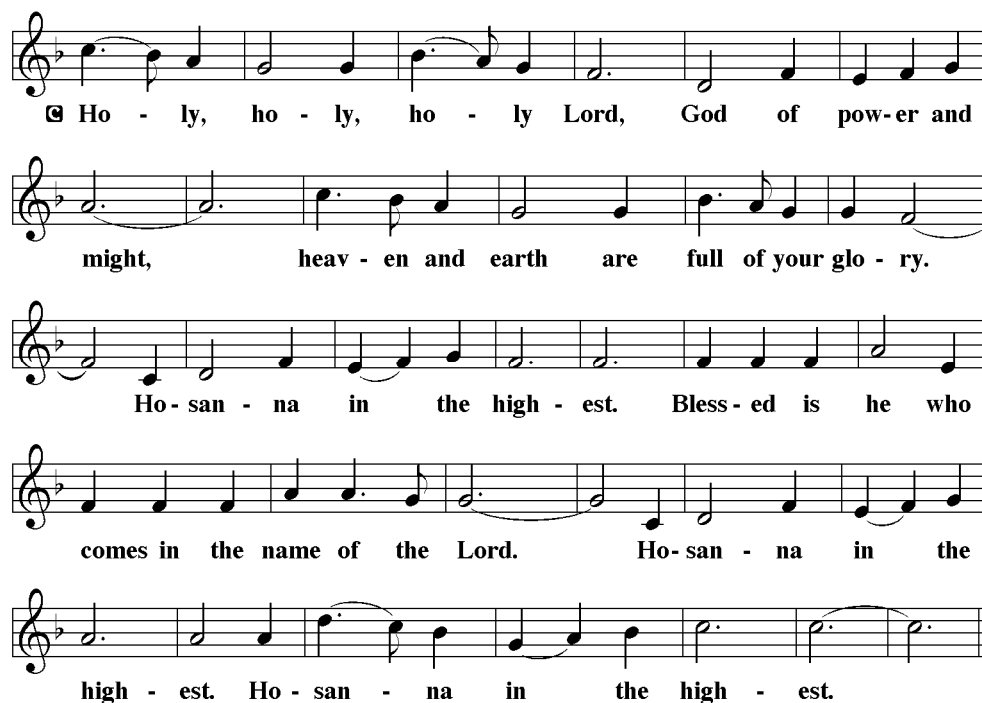
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. You bid your people cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast. Renew our zeal in faith and life, and bring us to the fullness of grace that belongs to the

children of God. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and  
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the  
high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son,  
whom you sent in this end of the ages to save and redeem us  
and to proclaim to us your will.

He is your Word inseparable from you.

Through him you created all things and in him you take delight.

He is our Lord Jesus, who born of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,  
fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people through his suffering and death,  
a death he freely accepted, in order to destroy death,  
and bring the gift of life eternal.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples,  
saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me."

Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink saying,  
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.”

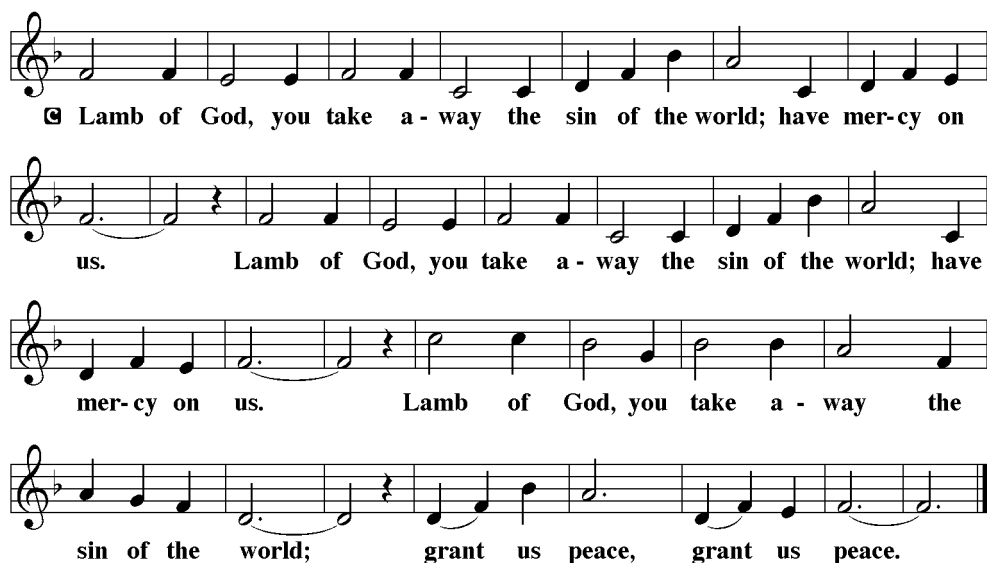
Send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts.  
Gather into one all who share this bread and wine;  
fill us with your same Spirit that we may praise and glorify you,  
through your Son Jesus Christ.

Through him all glory and honor are yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
in your holy Church both now and forever.  
**Amen.**

Lord as you have taught us, so now we 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.**

## \*LAMB OF GOD



## \*INVITATION TO COMMUNE

Come to the table!

Feast on God's goodness and mercy

**Thanks be to God!**

*All are welcome at the Lord's Table. Use the center aisle, pick up a small glass on the way. Receive the bread and then proceed to receive the wine by way of a pouring chalice. After communing return to your pew using a side aisle. Those not communing may come forward for a blessing.*

*Know that the crucified and risen Christ gives himself to you in his supper. If you cannot eat bread, drink only the wine. If you cannot drink wine, eat only the bread.*

## \*AFTER COMMUNION

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

**Amen.**

## \*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God,

at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.

As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,

now make us one loaf to feed the world;  
in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

**Amen.**

**\*BLESSING**

Almighty God: Father, Son ✠ and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**\*HYMN**

**Be Thou My Vision**

**WOV, “Blue,” 776**

**Be Thou My Vision**

1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,  
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,

naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:  
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!

thou my best thought by day and by night,  
Thou my soul's shel - ter, thou my high tow'r,  
thou, and thou on - ly, first in my heart,  
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.  
great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Text: Irish 8th–10th cent.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880–1931; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860–1935, alt.  
Music: SLANE, Irish tune

## **\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Believe the Good News!

**Thanks be to God.**

## **POSTLUDE**

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## **BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES**

*Sundays at 9:15 am. Come and join Pastor Vasey as together we rejoice in the promise of God's hope in Jesus Christ through study of the Book of James. We meet in the Chapel. All are welcome!*

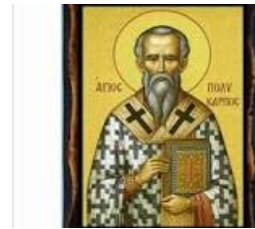
*Wednesdays during Lent, beginning February 25 and concluding March 25 at 12:10 pm, Fellowship Hall. Our study this year will be how the prophecies of Isaiah relate to Jesus Christ. All are welcome! Light snacks will be served.*

## **COMMEMORATIONS**

### **Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, died 156**

*Monday, February 23, 2026*

Because he is said to have been known by John, the author of Revelation, as well as the important early church fathers Irenaeus and Ignatius, Polycarp serves as a vital link in church history. He was burned at the stake at age 86 for refusing to renounce his faith.



### **Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, died 1921**

*Wednesday, February 25, 2026*

Born in Norway and trained there as a deaconess, Fedde was asked to come and minister to the poor and to seamen in New York City. She established the Deaconess House in Brooklyn as well as Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis.



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