



# ASCENSIONNEWS

February 2026

Volume 56 Issue 2

## **Lutheran Liturgical Practices During Lent** by Mr. Jonathan Swett

Each year, the Christian church embarks on a forty-day journey leading up to Easter, known as the season of Lent. When discussing Lenten liturgical practices of Lutherans, I believe one can distinguish three different categories into which each practice can be placed: Visual, Historical/Traditional, and Emotional/Spiritual. It can be debated; however, that some of the practices fall into multiple categories—and rightfully so.

The first visual component is that of the color purple that adorns the Lord's house in various manners throughout the season of Lent. The dye to make purple was very difficult to source in ancient times, thus attributed to royalty, and adorned the Christ only once—as He was mocked and ridiculed as the “King of the Jews” prior to His gruesome crucifixion. This deep hue has come to represent solemnity, penitence, and prayer as God's people meditate on the agony His Son willingly endured. Twice in the Lenten season, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the Lord's house may be adorned with the color black which represents the absence of light and the curse of sin and darkness which fell over creation that only the death of the perfect Son of God could abolish.

The second visual component is that of the sign of the cross applied upon the repentant Christian's forehead during the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday. Typically utilizing ash created by the burning of palms from the previous Palm Sunday, this symbolic rite is a reminder of the sign of the cross that was placed on us in our Baptisms, our mortality (“Remember: you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”), and the filth of our sin that has been washed clean by the blood of Jesus.

A historical/traditional component of the Lenten season is the omission of the word “Alleluia” from the liturgy and hymnody as well as an omission of the Hymn of Praise. “Alleluia”—a Hebrew word meaning “Praise the Lord”—returns full-voice in the glorious celebration of Easter morning. A long-standing practice at Our Savior in Hartland is the singing of a remarkably beautiful setting of “Farewell to Alleluia” by Olin Jones. As the conclusion to the Transfiguration of Our Lord service, the anthem wafts from the mouths of the *Cantate* choir in the balcony at the rear of the nave and greets the ears of the congregants below as they kneel in solemn reverence and meditation—marking a poignant transition into the holy time of Lent/Easter.

A historic service, the Great Vigil of Easter, on the eve of Easter Sunday, had fallen out of common practice, yet is recently experiencing a resurgence. The service—which is centered on the themes of darkness to light, and God's rescue of His people—includes the Services of Light (including the Kindling of a New Fire), the Word, Holy Baptism, and the Holy Eucharist.

As mentioned earlier, the emotional/spiritual character of the Lenten season is one of penitence. Connected to the Great Vigil of Easter; however, the season of Lent may also be one of preparation, as catechumens who had been prepared, were appointed to be baptized during the Service of Holy Baptism in the Easter Vigil service.

The practice of fasting (or “giving something up”) during Lent is not required for Lutherans because it is not commanded in Holy Scripture. Rather, as a matter of Christian freedom, starving oneself of a pleasure of the flesh is a way to remember daily the great sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to pay for the world's sin.

You may already be well-along your Lenten journey. May it be a blessing to you as you again experience the depth of Jesus' obedience and the great love of God to redeem a world so desperately in need of salvation.

Post author: The Post published: March 23, 2017 Post category: History / Worship Planning Jonathan A. Swett is Kantor of Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church and School, Hartland, Mich. Bibliography: Douglas K. Escue, “Colors of the Liturgical Season,” *Lutheran Worship Notes*, Issue 29 (1994). Thoma, Christopher. *Kids in the Divine Service*. St. Louis: Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2000.





**SOUPER BOWL OF CARING** - In conjunction with Tackle Hunger, the Board of Human Care is “kicking off” a canned soup drive benefiting the food pantries at Immanuel and Messiah. We collected 149 cans of soup in 2024 and 159 in 2025, and set a “goal” of 175 for 2026. The drive will run through Super Bowl Sunday on February 8. Monetary donations will also be accepted to purchase cans of soup; please denote your gift towards Souper Bowl of Caring. Remembering the words of Jesus from Matthew 25 – “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat” – we encourage everyone to “team up” and help “tackle hunger” in our community.



**"Soup"er Bowl Challenge** the Board of Fellowship will host a soup/chili challenge after services on Sunday, February 1. Enter your favorite soup or chili on the signup sheet in the narthex. Bring your crock pot to the Family Life Center on February 1. There will be tables available to plug in your crock pot in to keep it warm during the service. The congregation will gather after services sample the soup and chili and then vote on their favorite. Everyone can then get a full bowl of soup or chili. We will need at least 8 soups to make this event a success. Desserts are also needed. It is hoped that having this event after services will allow members to gather for food and fellowship and not have to worry about driving after dark.



Read the Book of Concord online. The text of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* is available for you to explore and study for free on [bookofconcord.cph.org](http://bookofconcord.cph.org)



**“CROSSWORDS FROM CHRIST”**



<b><u>2026 Lenten Midweek Service Schedule</u></b>	
Wednesday Schedule: 4:00p.m. 1 <sup>st</sup> Worship Service	
5:00-6:00 p.m. Meal; 6:30p.m. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Worship Service	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
February 18-Ash Wednesday	St. Paul
February 25	Ascension
March 4	Messiah
March 11	St. Paul
March 18	Ascension
March 25	Messiah



*but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*  
*Romans 5:8*





Sunday Worship Schedule:  
 Bible Study 8:15am,  
 Sunday School 8:30am  
 Worship Service 9:30am

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**Walkers M-F, 7-10am**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> New Dimensions of Praise Fellowship Hall 10am Bd of Elders following worship Soup/Chili Challenge following Worship	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b> Funeral Service of Carole Calia 10am Visitation 11am Service	<b>7</b> Basketball 10am-12pm E2 Conference @ St. Matthew 8:30am-12:15pm
<b>8</b> New Dimensions of Praise Fellowship Hall 10am Board of Human Care following worship	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Church Council 6:30pm	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Basketball 10am-12pm
<b>15</b> New Dimensions of Praise Fellowship Hall 10am	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Ash Wednesday @ St. Paul 4pm 1 <sup>st</sup> Service 5pm Meal 6:30pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Service	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Basketball 7-9pm	<b>21</b> No Basketball Craft Day 9am-6:30pm LHS Trivia Night 5pm Doors open 6pm Trivia starts
<b>22</b> New Dimensions of Praise 10am Mite Box Sunday	<b>23</b> Dorcas Circle 6pm	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Mid-week Lenten Service @ Ascension 4pm 1 <sup>st</sup> Service 5pm Meal 6:30pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Service	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Men's Group 8am Basketball 10am-12pm

*So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 1 John 4:16*