

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Welcome to First Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Taylors Falls

We are glad you are here!



PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: We come before you with heavy hearts. We do not always follow our savior's lead. We insist on our own way, putting worldly things before you. We doubt, we discriminate; we scatter—preferring darkness to the brilliance of your truth. For all this we ask your mercy and forgiveness, that our hearts may be made clean again. Amen.

P: As a loving shepherd gathers his sheep, so God protects and cares for us. As patient as a parent to a wayward child, so is God's mercy for us. Let us rejoice that we have received forgiveness, and that every day God seeks to renew us in the image of our Creator.

C: Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: Some take pride in chariots, and some in horses,

C: But our pride is in the name of God.

P: Some heap up empty praises, so they may be heard,

C: But our pride is in the name of God.

P: Some fast to look dismal and pray to be noticed,

C: But our pride is in the name of God.

OPENING HYMN: Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service (vs 1-3)

ELW #712

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Loving God,

C: You desire a simple, humble relationship with us. Turn our hearts away from seeking others' approval and toward your way of mercy and peace, as our savior taught us. Amen.

GOSEPEL READING: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew the 6th chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord

¹ “Beware of practicing your righteousness 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 somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces 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, ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ

ASH WEDNESDAY MESSAGE: Pastor Justin Fenger

HYMN: WE BELONG TO EACH OTHER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P: God of wilderness and bread, we pray with humble spirits, acknowledging our fragility and need. Through the ashes, we remember we are dust, yet we are held in your boundless love.

C: Hear our prayers, O God.

P: We pray for those wandering in wilderness seasons—those who may be hungry, lonely, or uncertain. Sustain them with your bread of life and lead them toward hope.

C: Hear our prayers, O God.

P: We pray for those facing temptation to give in to fear, greed, or despair. Strengthen them with your Spirit so they may choose life.

C: Hear our prayers, O God.

P: We pray for all who bear the heavy burdens of sickness, grief, oppression, and weariness. Bring healing, comfort, and justice, and remind them they are not alone.

C: Hear our prayers, O God.

P: Teach us to see your grace at work in the dust of our lives, transforming, redeeming, and calling us to mature discipleship. Help us live as people shaped by your mercy, caring for the earth, our neighbors, and ourselves.

C: Hear our prayers, O God.

P: Holy One, we lift these prayers to you, trusting in your steadfast love and the nourishment you provide. Feed us with your word and presence, and guide us through every wilderness we face.

C: Amen.

CONTINUED LITURGY FOR ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

P: On Ash Wednesday, we pause to remember we were formed from dust—the same dust that grows our wheat, roots our grasses, and feeds our livestock, and the same dust that feeds the world. Our bodies will eventually return to dust and continue to nourish the planet, fortifying the plants, sustaining animal life, and passing through the cycles of life once again. All of this is for the glory of the Creator, who set these cycles in motion. Remembering we are dust doesn't diminish our worth or cleanliness; rather, it affirms our integral, connected place in this beautiful work of God's love. We were made with love, and when we die, God shall receive us with love. May we pause to remember our mortality, thank God for this precious life, and reflect upon life's end.

C: Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

We mark ourselves with ashes, remembering our frailty and sin. But we do not remain in death; we are invited to the feast of life.

C: At this table, Christ is both host and meal, nourishing us with grace.

P: Come, for all is ready. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

C: The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

C: We believe we are created from dust, and to dust we shall return, yet we are held in God's eternal love.

We believe Christ, the bread of life, nourishes our spirits and sustains us in all seasons.

We believe the wilderness is not a place of abandonment, but a place where God meets and strengthens us.

We believe Christ, who was tempted, walks with us in our struggles and empowers us to choose life and faithfulness.

We believe repentance is a gift, a way to turn back to God and embrace transformation.

We believe God's grace is sufficient for every moment of weakness and every step through the wilderness.

We believe God provides for our needs, offering spiritual and physical nourishment through Christ.

We believe Christ's example calls us to resist temptation and live lives of compassion, mercy, and justice.

Even in our fragility and imperfection, we believe God can use us to bring hope, healing, and light to the world.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

(The congregation is invited forward to first receive the ashes. The minister marks each forehead with the sign of the cross, saying:)

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

(As the congregation receives the ashes, they also receive bread and wine by Communion Servers)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

P: Lord of life, we have received ashes, acknowledging our mortality. We have received your body and blood, tasting your eternal life.

All: In your mercy, sustain us in our Lenten journey, that we may trust in your provision and resist the temptations that lead us away from you. Amen.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

P: Go forth now, remembering you are dust, that you shall return to dust, and God goes with you through it all. Carry this promise with you, and may you live a life reflecting its truth. And now may the love of God enfold you, the peace of Christ guide you, and the power of the Holy Spirit sustain you, now and forever.

C: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: Be Thou My Vision (vs 1,3)

ELW #793

P: As you go from this place, walk humbly in the dust, but do not be afraid. For you are marked by the cross and fed by grace. Go in peace, and serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

*(OFFERING WILL BE PLACED IN BACK OF SANCTURY,
NO OFFERING WILL BE TAKEN DURING WORSHIP)*