

Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026



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Memorial Lutheran Church | Nevada, Iowa

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.

While this is a more somber service, we hope that if you have a young person with you asking questions that you will feel welcome to answer them as they come up. Also, we understand that sometimes kids can feel a little uncertain about getting a cross of ashes marked on their foreheads! If your child wants to receive the ashes - great! If your child would feel more comfortable watching you and others - that is great too! Thank you and we're glad you are joining us tonight.

Prelude: “I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say” - Michael Burkhardt
Lois Theesfield, organ

Welcome

Gathering Song: “Just As I Am, without One Plea” - ELW #592

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 before God, who removes our guilt
and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

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 disdain 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.

Prayer of the Day

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.**

First Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

¹Blow 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—

²a 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.

¹²Yet even now, says the Lord,
 return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³rend 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.

¹⁴Who 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?

¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶gather 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.

¹⁷Between 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 51:10: *"Create in Me A Clean Heart"* - Jane Marshall
Memorial Choir

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

^{20b}We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For 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. ²For 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! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as 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.

Children at Heart Sermon

Gospel Acclamation - from "Now the Feast and Celebration" - Marty Haugen

Congregation:

Re - turn to God with all your heart, the Source of grace and

mer-cy; Come, seek the ten - der faith-ful-ness of God. *Repeat*

Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-20

The Gospel according to Matthew
Glory to You, O Lord

[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. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so 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. ⁶But 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. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so 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
Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: “Change My Heart O God” - ELW #801

Thanksgiving Over the Ashes

Lent is a time for us to return to our Creator who formed us from the dust of the earth. Our lives are finite, so we want to spend every precious moment in tune with God, living whole, abundant lives—the kind of lives we were created to lead. And so in recognition of our origins in the earth, in acknowledgment of our finite days, we come to receive ashes and remember: dust we are, and to dust we shall return.

Let us pray,
Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.
Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence,
so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift
are we given everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

*“Come You Sinners, Poor and Needy” - words by Joseph Hart / Traditional
American melody
Memorial Choir with handbell ensemble*

Offering

**Music Voluntary: “Just As I Am” - arr. Emily Maxson Porter
Lois Theesfield, organ**

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.

Preface

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.
You call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

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

Invitation to Communion

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

Hymns during Communion

"The Glory of These Forty Days" - ELW #319

"Come, Bring Your Burdens to God" - ACS #1009

Come, Bring Your Burdens

The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics in both Afrikaans and English. The lyrics are:
Wo - za nom - thwa - lo wa - kho; wo - za nom -
Come, bring your bur - dens to God; come, bring your
thwa - lo wa - kho; wo - za nom - thwa - lo wa - kho, U -
bur - dens to God; come, bring your bur - dens to God, for
ye - s'a - ka - so - za - thi hayi.
Je - sus will nev - er say no.

Text: South African; English text Barbara Clark, Mairi Munro, and Martine Stemerick

Music: WOZA NOMTHWALO WAKHO, South African melody; arr. Welile Sigabi

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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.

Blessing

Beloved,
we are God's own people,
holy, washed, renewed.
God bless you and keep you,
shower you with mercy,
fill you with courage,
and + give you peace.
Amen.

Sending Song: "Be Thou My Vision" - ELW #793

Dismissal

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.
Thanks be to God!

Postlude: "Prelude in E Minor" - J.S. Bach
Lois Theesfield, organ

Please take your time departing. Know that Jesus accompanies you on this Lenten journey and in all things. Please come worship with us every Wednesday in Lent leading up to Holy Week at 7 pm. You are also encouraged to join us for a simple meal in the fellowship hall before worship each week available between 6-7 pm. Peace be with you.

Prayers for Healing

If you have a prayer request, please email pastorkathleen@mlcnevada.org or emily@mlcnevada.org, or call the church office at 515-382-6509.

Please keep Shelley Ludeman and family in your prayers following the death of her sister, Rhonda Thompson

Please keep Kenzie and Fred Alderson and family in your prayers following the death of Fred's mother Beverly Alderson.

Bill Couser	Jill Rhodes	Johann Thiel
Mary Brinkman	Connie Robinson <i>sister of Shirley Klonglan</i>	Mike Neal
Ashley and Ming Xu <i>friends of Aly Sassman</i>	Barb McDaniel	Christina King
Julia Zaffarano	Ken Huffaker <i>father of Kendra McCauley</i>	Sherry Kluever
Joan Stensland	Emma Nelson <i>granddaughter of Steve & Nan Jungst</i>	Kim Elliott
Kathy Lynn Johnson	Ardith Forsyth	Pr. Marcia Kisner
Teresa Krebs	Eileen Miller	Marlene Waddell <i>friend of Virginia Palmisano-Goettsch</i>
Kari Toot	Karen Anderson	Cassie Harrell
Tanya Sorem	Caleb Roof	Jean Smith
Julie & Craig Sutherland	Evelyn Onstot	Easton Farrington
June Copenhaver <i>mother of Diane Martin</i>	Katy Beno <i>sister of Sandy Christian</i>	Janice Hartz
Pastor Andrea Myers <i>wife of Pastor Ronald Myers</i>	Eric Forsyth	Jackie Byers <i>daughter of Shellie Black</i>
Charlie Lloyd	Crystal Vines	Donna See
Bert Ann Ray	Katie Bass <i>niece of Judy Coverdale</i>	Norma Dannan <i>friend of Betty Runge</i>
Wayne Kinyon	Wayne Johnson	Fred Samuelson
Loren Bryant <i>brother of Arlys Neal</i>	Troy Vincent	Jaylee Bartleson
		Janeen Driscoll

Hospitalizations: *If you are in the hospital or are going to be in the hospital and want us to be aware of it, please call the church office or have someone call on your behalf. Unless directed otherwise, your name will be placed on the prayer list and included in electronic notifications.*

Announcements

A Special Thank You

“We would like to thank all those who celebrated our 50th anniversary with us. You each brought joy and helped make a special memory for us. Thank you, Memorial Family.” - Connie & Mike Kinyon

New Book Study - “*The Last Week*” by Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg

What do the Gospels really teach us about Jesus's final days in Jerusalem? Walk through the days of Holy Week and gain deeper insights from the work of two well respected biblical scholars. They help readers unpack political and spiritual dynamics from Jesus's time and explore their impact on our own understanding today. You're invited to join us to learn and have your own faith deepened through this study.

If you would like to participate, please RSVP to Pastor Kathleen at pastorkathleen@mlcnevada.org or by calling the office at 515-382-6509. Paperback books can be provided, in which case there is a suggested donation of \$17. Alternatively you are welcome to provide and use your own copy or ebook version if you prefer. We will meet on Sundays after worship beginning February 22.

Time Change!

Our Thursday morning Bible study is moving to Thursday morning at 8:30 am. Come join us! No Bible study experience is necessary. All you need to bring is yourself and a Bible. Don't have one? We have one for you!

Thank you for your LWR donations!

Your donations allowed the Wednesday Night Live kids to package 47 health kits for Lutheran World Relief this past Wednesday! We can complete even more kits, but are in need of more bars of soap and bath towels. Your support and donations are greatly appreciated!

Lutheran Day on the Hill - February 26

Join LSI and the three Iowa synods of the ELCA for Lutheran Day on the Hill in Des Moines in 2026! Lutheran Day on the Hill is LSI's biggest advocacy event of the year. Over 400 participants gather at a local downtown church to learn about critical issues Iowa children, adults and families are facing. After learning about advocacy and LSI's mission in action, the group heads to the Iowa State Capitol to talk directly with legislators. This year's areas of emphasis are 1) Investing in a sustainable model for food access, 2) Support for Iowa's mental health system, and 3) Support for services that empower refugees and immigrants.

Volunteer Opportunity: Story Pals at Central Elementary

What: Story Pals is a program that provides quality reading experiences for 4 to 5 year old preschoolers and supports the development of language and early literacy skills. The intended goal is to increase participant readiness for school and help spark the joy of reading!

When: Wednesdays, February 11th - April 29th; 8:45 - 10:15 AM OR 12:45 - 2:15 PM

Where: Central Elementary School, Nevada

Sign up: <https://share.vomevolunteer.com/rWoOOlzZ3Zb> or contact the church office

Save the Date: Community BINGO & Nachos February 22

Join us for BINGO and nachos on Sunday, February 22 from 5:30—6:30 PM. Free-will donations will go to Memorial's Dorcas Fund, which provides assistance to those in need. This is a fun community event for all ages (kids and adults welcome!), but please note that children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

We're still in need of prizes for our BINGO winners! We're looking for items with a value of around \$5 (or less) for a variety of ages (kids and adults). If you would like to donate a prize or two, please bring them to the church office.

Lastly, we'd like to have some sweet treats available; **if you would like to provide cookies or bars, please see the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.**
Thank you!

Stay Connected with Memorial

Keep up-to-date with Memorial and community events, prayer requests, volunteer opportunities, and more; sign up to receive emails and/or periodic texts at bit.ly/memorialconnect or by using the QR code.



Online Giving with Tithe.ly

Thank you for joining us for worship today! If you would like to support our ministries, online gifts can be made using <http://tithe.ly/> give or by scanning the QR code. ***Did you know? In Tithe.ly, you can set up one-time or recurring gifts to the General Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, Drive for the Drive Pavement Project, Sanctuary Screens Fund, Sanctuary Carpet Fund, and more!***



Save the Date

Weekly Bible Study

When: Thursday, February 19, 8:30 AM

Council Meeting

When: Thursday, February 19, 7:00 PM

Viewing of "Solos"

Memorial choir's Carnegie Hall debut alongside 200+ vocalists!

When: Sunday, February 22, 10:30 AM

Where: Chapel

Book Study: "The Last Week"

When: Sunday, February 22, 10:30 AM

Where: Library

Community BINGO & Nachos

When: Sunday, February 22, 5:30 - 6:30 PM

Mid-week Lenten Worship & Supper (each Wednesday during Lent leading up to Holy Week)

When: Wednesday, February 25, supper at 6 PM followed by worship at 7 PM

Weekly Bible Study

When: Thursday, February 26, 8:30 AM

Mid-week Lenten Worship & Supper (each Wednesday during Lent leading up to Holy Week)

When: Wednesday, March 4, supper at 6 PM followed by worship at 7 PM

Weekly Bible Study

When: Thursday, March 5, 8:30 AM

Beer & Theology

When: Thursday, March 5, 6:30 PM

Where: Cubbies on Main

Bowling with Memorial

When: Sunday, March 22, 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Where: Sports Bowl

This Week at Memorial

Monday, February 16 - Sunday, February 22

16 Monday Church Office Closed	17 Tuesday 6:00 PM Handbells Rehearsal 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	18 Wednesday 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service	19 Thursday 8:30 AM Bible Study in Chapel 7:00 PM Council Meeting
20 Friday Have an idea for our monthly newsletter? Perhaps a focus on a ministry or group you're involved with at Memorial or in the community? We would love to hear from you! Please contact emily@mlcnevada.org or call the church office.	21 Saturday	22 Sunday 9:00 AM Worship in-person and online 10:30 AM Viewing of "Solus" in Chapel <i>(MLC choir's Carnegie Hall debut alongside 200+ vocalists!)</i> 10:30 AM Book Study: "The Last Week" Library 5:30 PM Community BINGO & Nachos Fellowship Hall	

Office Hours
 Tuesday - Friday 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM*
 *Call 515-382-6509 for appointments outside of office hours

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Kathleen Lotz, Pastor | Lois Theesfield, Director of Music Ministry
 Emily Dalthorp, Parish Administrator for Outreach & Engagement
 Mike Coverdale, Custodian

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