



ASH WEDNESDAY

Liturgy of the Day and The Holy Eucharist
February 18, 2026 - 12 noon and 6 p.m.

Welcome! We're so glad to have you joining us for worship today.

ST. MARK'S
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH
PALO ALTO

Welcome to Saint Mark's

We are a community dedicated to deepening our relationship with God and embodying the Spirit of Christ through faithful expressions of love, service, compassion, and justice.

All are welcome to join in worship. This service is live-streamed and recorded. Assistive listening devices are available—please ask a greeter for more information.

Newcomers and visitors are encouraged to fill in a Welcome Card or sign the visitor book, which will be on the welcome table. If there are things about our worship that are new to you or do not make sense, try to embrace the unfamiliarity. Consider that you are entering a conversation with God and the faithful which began centuries before we were here and will continue after we are gone. Just join in as you are, and bear with us as we are, and we will all be transformed as we go.

*Please see instructions for receiving Communion on pp. 14-15. **All who seek to draw near to Christ are invited.***

*The art in the Sanctuary and the Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene to inspire our prayer in this season is **Icons in Transformation** by Ludmila Pawlowska. Born in Kazakhstan and now based in Sweden, Pawlowska has been shaped by profound experiences that continue to inspire her art. **Icons in Transformation** has been shown in cathedrals and museums around the world, and is in Palo Alto through Easter.*

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THE WORD OF GOD

Please stand in body or spirit.

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Blessed be God who forgives all our sins.

God's mercy endures for ever.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

God be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet day after day they seek me

and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness

and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;

they ask of me righteous judgments,

they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,

and oppress all your workers.

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight

and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today

will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose,

a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,

and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,

a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,

to undo the thongs of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,

and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,

and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them,

and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Here the prophet Isaiah [58:1-12] explores the connection between fasting and justice.

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

The Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 103:8-14 (*Sung in unison*)

Tone 8.1



You are full of compassion and mércy, *
slow to anger and / of great kindnéss.

You will not always accúse us, *
nor will you keep your an-/ger for éver.

You have not dealt with us according tó our sins, *
nor rewarded us according / to our wíckedness.

In this season we sing the psalms to plainsong, the musical form attributed to St. Gregory the Great (c. 540-604). The first two notes of the chant are only used in the first verse. The marks ´ and / within the text indicate where to change note.

For as the heavens are high abóve the earth, *
so is your mercy great upon / those who féar you.

As far as the east is fróm the west, *
so far have you re-/moved our síns from us.

As a parent cares fór a child, *
so do you care for / those who féar you.

For you yourself know whereof wé are made; *
you remember that / we are bút dust.

A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

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

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

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

Thanks be to God.

This passage is from the second epistle (letter) of Paul to the Corinthians [5:20b—6:10]. In it, the apostle speaks of the salvation of Christ.

Please stand in body or spirit.

THE GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Christ, You are the Word of God!

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

Jesus said, “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.

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

“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. 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.

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

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor

In this passage from **Matthew's Gospel** [6:1-6, 16-21], Jesus speaks of how to practice fasting.

rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Musical score for the hymn "Praise to you, O Christ, You are the Word of God!". The score is written for a single voice part on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: "Praise to you, O Christ, You are the Word of God!". The music is in a simple, hymn-like style with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C).

Please be seated.

THE SERMON The Reverend Nancy Ross

Please stand in body or spirit.

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF A HOLY LENT

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now humble ourselves before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is then kept for a time.

The sermon helps us to reflect on the Scriptures we have heard and to connect them to the Good News present in our lives now.

LITANY OF PENITENCE

Let us pray.

Most holy and merciful Father:

**We confess to you and to one another,
and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth,
that we have sinned by our own 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, Lord.

We have ignored 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, Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,

We confess to you, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

We confess to you, Lord.

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

We confess to you, Lord.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

We confess to you, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

We confess to you, Lord.

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done: for our disregard for human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

Accept our repentance, Lord.

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;

Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

That we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live, has given power and commandment to God's ministers to declare and pronounce to the people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. Our God pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe the holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech God to grant us true repentance and the Holy Spirit, that those things may please God which we do on this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be always with you.

And also with you.

We share Christ's
peace, given to the
disciples.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

HYMN 149 Eternal Lord of love, behold your Church

OLD 124TH

1 E - ter - nal Lord of love, be - hold your Church
 2 So dai - ly dy - ing to the way of self,
 3 If dead in you, so in you we a - rise,

walk - ing once more the pil - grim way of Lent,
 so dai - ly liv - ing to your way of love,
 you the first - born of all the faith - ful dead;

led by your cloud by day, by night your fire,
 we walk the road, Lord Je - sus, that you trod,
 and as through ston - y ground the green shoots break,

moved by your love and toward your pres - ence bent:
 know - ing our - selves bap - tized in - to your death:
 glo - rious in spring - time dress of leaf and flower,

far off yet here—the goal of all de - sire.
 so we are dead and live with you in God.
 so in the Fa - ther's glo - ry shall we wake.

Holy and gracious God: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and maker and of all.

Jesus stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Savior Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, Almighty God, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in Christ. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Savior. By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

The Great Amen is the people's consent to and affirmation of the Eucharistic prayer.

THE LORD'S PRAYER S 148

Ambrosian Chant, adapt. Mason Martens

Celebrant
 As our Sa - vior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

Celebrant and People
 Our Fa - ther in hea - ven, hal - lowed be your Name,
 your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in hea - ven.
 Give us to - day our dai - ly bread.
 For - give us our sins as we for - give those who sin a - gainst us.
 Save us from the time of tri - al, and de - liv - er us from e - vil.
 For the king - dom, the power, and the glo - ry are yours,
 now and for ev - er. A - men.

The Gospels of both Matthew and Luke record Jesus teaching this, commonly called the "Our Father" or the "Lord's prayer," to his disciples when they asked to learn how to pray.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The Presider breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

O Lamb of God, that tak - est a - way the sins of the world: have mer - cy up - on us.

O Lamb of God, that tak - est a - way the sins of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.

O Lamb of God, that tak - est a - way the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

All who seek God and are drawn to Christ are welcome at this, Christ's table, to receive the bread and the wine, if desired. Gluten-free wafers are available.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Please stand in body or spirit.

**Compassionate God,
you have fed us with the bread of heaven.
Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage:
May our fasting be hunger for justice;
our alms, a making of peace;
and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts;
through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

In addition to the consecrated bread, wine (or grape juice in the glass chalice) is available to those who wish to receive it. Please drink directly from the cup, guiding it to your mouth, and do not intinct (dip) the bread.

SOLEMN PRAYER

Grant, most merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN 143 The glory of these forty days

ERHALT UNS, HERR



1 The glo - ry of these for - ty days we
2 A - lone and fast - ing Mo - ses saw the
3 So Dan - iel trained his mys - tic sight, de -
4 Then grant us, Lord, like them to be full
5 O Fa - ther, Son, and Spi - rit blest, to



1 ce - le - brate with songs of praise; for Christ, through whom all
2 lov - ing God who gave the law; and to E - li - jah,
3 liv - ered from the li - ons' might; and John, the Bride - groom's
4 oft in fast and prayer with thee; our spi - rits strength - en
5 thee be ev - ery prayer ad - dressed, who art in three - fold



1 things were made, him - self has fast - ed and has prayed.
2 fast - ing, came the steeds and char - i - ots of flame.
3 friend, be - came the her - ald of Mes - si - ah's name.
4 with thy grace, and give us joy to see thy face.
5 Name a - dored, from age to age, the on - ly Lord.

DISMISSAL

*The Deacon dismisses the People, who respond **Thanks be to God.***

POSTLUDE Verse

Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656)

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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