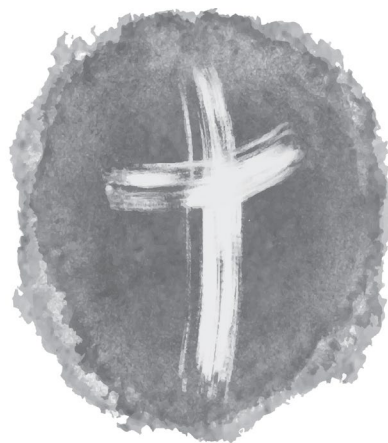


I Love to Tell the Story:  
The Story of God's Deliverance in Exodus

Ash Wednesday  
February 18, 2026  
11:30 am  
and 6:30 pm  
Order of Service



Ash  
WEDNESDAY

**Set Free: the Gospel in Exodus**

We are beginning Lent, the forty days we set aside to focus on our Lord's Passion as we lead up to Easter. The Lord calls us to "Return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning," and Joel calls for a "solemn assembly" (Joel 2:12, 15). It is time to "to receive the grace of God" (2 Corinthians 6:1). And it is a time for active dialogue between each of us and our Father in heaven, as Jesus instructs in the Gospel. The readings from Exodus, which shall guide our worship through Lent, though, also provide us with Good News. We do not deserve it, but God hears and answers our cries. Be ready to pray; be ready to thank our gracious God.



room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep and say, "Spare Your people, O Lord, and make not Your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

**CONFESSION**      Psalm 51:1–9

Pastor: Let us humbly go to God, confessing our sins.  
Almighty, eternal, loving Father,

**People: we confess to You and one another not only that we have sinned in our thoughts, words, and actions but that each failing has been a symptom of our sinful condition.**

**We have tried to overlook our faults but realize the truth of our fallenness. We have tried to do better by our own strength but have fallen back into sin again. We are helpless to change by ourselves.**

Pastor: We mirror the sins of our spiritual ancestor, whom You, gracious God, guided to write in the Psalms:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love;  
according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

**People: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.**

Pastor: Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight,

**People: so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment.**

Pastor: Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

**People: Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being, and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**

Pastor: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
**People: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

Pastor: Let me hear joy and gladness;  
**People: let the bones that You have broken rejoice.**

Pastor: Hide Your face from my sins,  
**People: and blot out all my iniquities.**

Pastor: Let us go to our gracious God, asking for mercy.

People: **We are not the people You would have us be; we are not what we had hoped for; we throw ourselves on the mercy of Your holy court, asking Your forgiveness and renewal of life for the sake of our Savior, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

### IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Pastor: As a sign of your repentance and trust in God's mercy and grace, please come forward as you are directed to receive the sign of the cross on your forehead and to hear the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

*All may come forward to receive ashes.*

**Hymn During the Imposition** "Savior, When in Dust to Thee" *LSB* 419

**Anthem During the Imposition (6:30)** "Dust and Ashes" by David Haas  
Text by Brian Wren  
Ascension Chorale  
Ann Westra, flute

### ABSOLUTION

Pastor: God does not desire the death of sinners, but that they may live forgiven in His presence. He sent His Son, our Lord Jesus, to take our sins upon Himself and then to rise in our place, drawing people of faith to His eternal realm. In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

☩ **WORD** ☩

**INTROIT** *Psalm 51:1–3, 10–12, 17*

Pastor: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love;

People: **according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.**

*Left side: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,*

*Right side: and cleanse me from my sin!*

*Left side: For I know my transgressions,*

*Right side: and my sin is ever before me.*

*Left side: Create in me a clean heart, O God,*

*Right side: and renew a right spirit within me.*

*Left side: Cast me not away from Your presence,  
Right side: and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.*

**People: Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit.**

**Pastor:** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

**People: a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.**

**Old Testament Reading - Part Two..... Joel 2:18-19**

*(When we return to the Lord He blesses us.)*

**Pastor:** Then the Lord became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. The Lord answered and said to His people, “Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.”  
This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Epistle.....2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10**

*(Although we are oppressed, today brings us closer to God’s promised salvation.)*



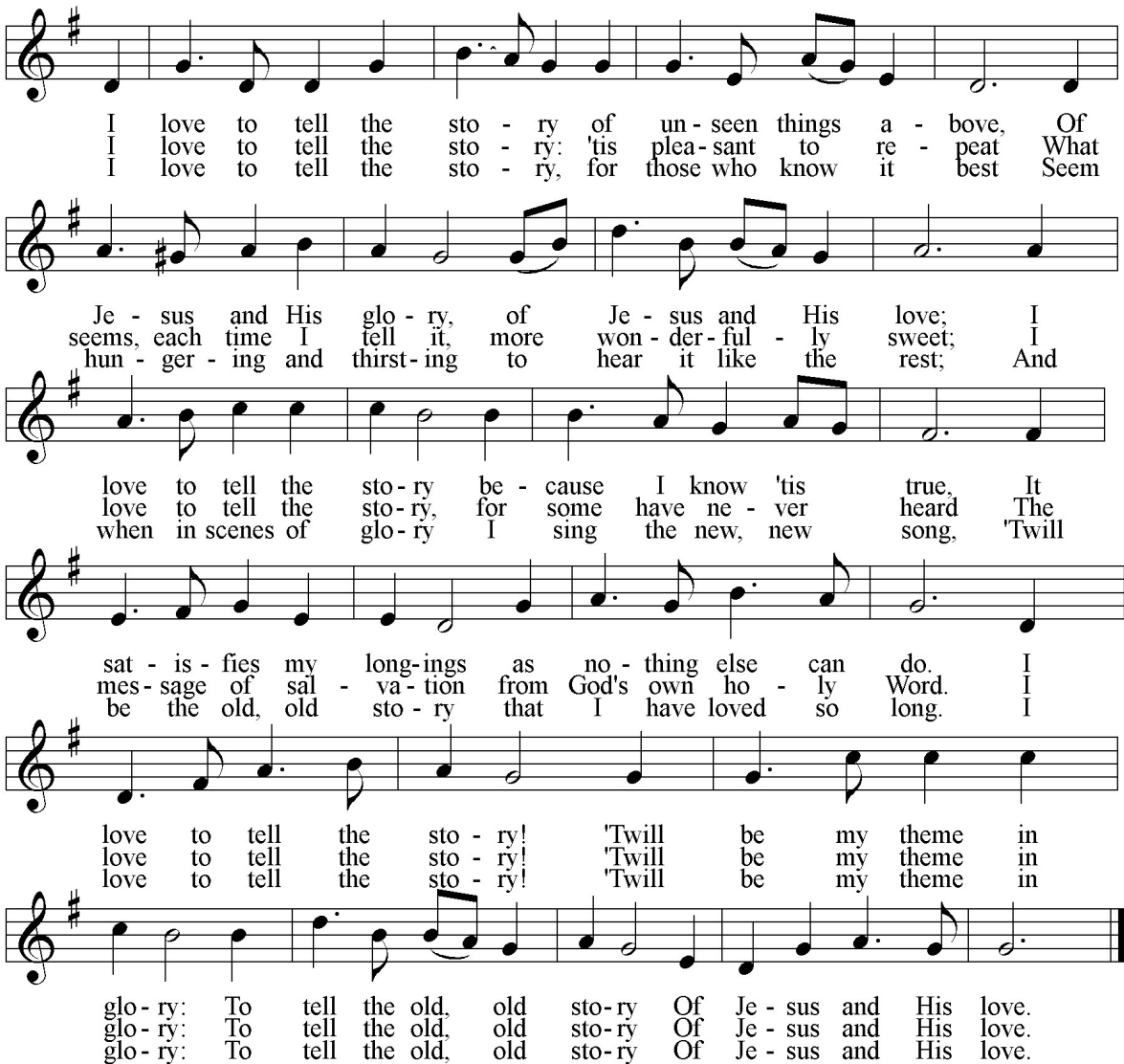
**SERMON READING Exodus 2:23–25**

**Pastor:** During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.  
This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## Hymn

## “I Love to Tell the Story”



I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove, Of  
I love to tell the sto - ry: 'tis plea-sant to re - peat What  
I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best Seem  
Je - sus and His glo - ry, of Je - sus and His love; I  
seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet; I  
hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it like the rest; And  
love to tell the sto - ry be - cause I know 'tis true, It  
love to tell the sto - ry, for some have ne - ver heard The  
when in scenes of glo - ry I sing the new, new song, 'Twill  
sat - is - fies my long - ings as no - thing else can do. I  
mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly Word. I  
be the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long. I  
love to tell the sto - ry! 'Twill be my theme in  
love to tell the sto - ry! 'Twill be my theme in  
love to tell the sto - ry! 'Twill be my theme in  
glo - ry: To tell the old, old sto - ry Of Je - sus and His love.  
glo - ry: To tell the old, old sto - ry Of Je - sus and His love.  
glo - ry: To tell the old, old sto - ry Of Je - sus and His love.

CCLI Song # 29413 Arabella Katherine Hankey | William Gustavus Fischer © Words: Public Domain; Music: Public Domain For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com) CCLI License # 1903595

## Sermon

## “God’s Deliverance”

**Pastor John Larson**

**Text: Exodus 1-2**

## Prayers (based on Psalm 51)

**Pastor:** Almighty and merciful God, we approach your throne of grace today as sinners who require your cleansing.

**People:** **Lord, have mercy.**

**Pastor:** Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

**People: Lord, grant me your grace both to will and to do what pleases you.**

*(Other intercessions may be offered here)*

Pastor: All these things we pray in the name of Jesus, who cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

**People: Amen.**

### ✠ HOLY COMMUNION AT ASCENSION ✠

*The Lord, our Host, invites to his Supper those who are baptized into the Christian faith, confess him as Savior, have been instructed and have examined themselves, truly repent of sins, believe the Risen Lord is present in the sacrament with his true body and blood, and resolve to live faithfully and obediently. For those with an intolerance to alcohol, the center ring of the tray contains grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available to those with wheat allergies. Children who have not been instructed, yet desire a blessing, are invited to come forward with arms crossed. When receiving the bread and wine, the communicant may respond with "Amen!", a word of affirmation and belief.*

**Preface (Divine Service, Setting One)**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them to the Lord.**

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

**People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

**Words of Institution**

**Lord's Prayer** *Matthew 6:9-13*

**People: 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.**

**Music During Distribution**

**Special Organ Music "O Christ the Lamb of God" Paul Manz**

**Hymn "Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling" WOV 734  
(Blue Supplement)**

**Hymn "Lamb of God" LSB 550**

**General Communion Blessing**

**Closing Sentences** *Psalm 51:10-12*

Pastor: Create in me a clean heart, O God,

**People: and renew a right spirit within me.**

Pastor: Cast me not away from Your presence,

**People: and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.**

Pastor: Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,

**People: and uphold me with a willing spirit.**

## Benediction

**Pastor:** May the merciful God, who is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, empower you to live according to his good and gracious will, through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory forever.

**People:** Amen.

## Closing Hymn "Blessed Assurance"

**BOB 24**

1 Bless-ed as - sur - ance, Je - sus is mine! O what a fore - taste of glo - ry di -  
2 Per - fect sub - mis - sion: Christ on the cross, For my sal - va - tion He suf - fered  
3 Know - ing for - give - ness, now I'm at rest, I in my Sav - ior am hap - py and  
4 Vic - try o'er Sa - tan, death, and the grave, O what a joy to know that I'm  
vine! Heir of sal - va - tion, pur - chase of God, Born of His Spir - it, washed in His blood.  
loss, Gave up His life and gave up His throne, Pur - chased and won me, made me His own.  
blest; Watch - ing and wait - ing, look - ing a - bove, Filled with His good - ness, trust - ing His love.  
saved! Claim - ing no mer - it, works of my own, All glo - ry, praise, be to God a - lone!  
This is my sto - ry this is my song, Prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day  
long; This is my sto - ry, this is my song Prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long.

*New and altered text by Michael Zehnder @2000 Used by Permission*

## Postlude "Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain"

**Michael Burkhardt**

**OFFICIANT and CELEBRANT**  
**MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP / ORGANIST**  
**CHOIR DIRECTOR**  
**CHOIR ACCOMPANIST**  
**FLAUTIST**  
**ELDERS**

Pastor John Larson  
Michael Zehnder  
Stephanie Roettjer  
Diana Gaide  
Ann Westra

11:30 a.m. Jim Wert; 6:30 p.m. Benjamin Dallet

