

Muddy Creek Lutheran Church

11 South Muddy Creek Rd, Denver, PA 17517

Ash Wednesday – February 18, 2026

*Noon Service
Online Bulletin*



TODAY'S READINGS

JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17

PSALM 51:1-17

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20B—6:10

MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

www.mclchurch.org 717-336-2770 office@mclchurch.org

Follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/mclchurch>) and YouTube
(<https://www.youtube.com/@muddycreeklutheranchurchde4004>)

The second service is livestreamed and posted on our website and YouTube channel.

Children's activity boxes are in the rear of the sanctuary

Welcome to Muddy Creek Lutheran Church

* = Please stand as you are able; Congregational responses are **bold**

GATHERING

Welcome

Announcements

Passing the Peace

P: The Peace of the Lord be with you.

C: **And also, with you.**

*Greeting

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also, with you**

*Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

THE WORD

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

¹ Blow 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—

² a 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.

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

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD your God,
 for he is gracious and merciful,
 slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
 and relenting from punishment.

¹⁴ Who 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?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶ gather the people.
Consecrate the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between 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?' "

L: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 51:1-17 (read responsively)

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.
- ² **Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,
and cleanse me | from my sin.**
- ³ For I know | my offenses,
and my sin is ev- | er before me.
- ⁴ **Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment.**
- ⁵ Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my | mother's womb.
- ⁶ **Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**
- ⁷ Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.
- ⁸ **Let me hear | joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**
- ⁹ Hide your face | from my sins,
and blot out | all my wickedness.
- ¹⁰ **Create in me a clean | heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- | it within me.**

- ¹¹ Cast me not away | from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.
- ¹² **Restore to me the joy of | your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit. R**
- ¹³ Let me teach your ways | to offenders,
and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.
- ¹⁴ **Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**
- ¹⁵ O Lord, o- | pen my lips,
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.
- ¹⁶ **For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.
You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**
- ¹⁷ The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise.

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

^{20b} We entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1} As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ² For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! ³ We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷ truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸ in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true, ⁹ as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed, ¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Reading:** Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 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.”

L: The Gospel of the Lord,

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Invitation to Lent

We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Today, we begin forty days of remembrance of Jesus' Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. I invite you to the discipline of Lent – self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love, strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament.

*Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

C: **Amen.**

P: Reading responsively, let us confess our sins, in the presence of God and of one another. 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 disdaining 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. Amen.**

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.

Imposition of Ashes

All who desire to receive ashes may come forward. During the imposition, you will hear "you are dust, and to dust you shall return" from Genesis 3:19. Ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. We receive ashes in the form of a cross – the same symbol placed on us in our baptism.

P: Accomplish in us, oh God, the work of your salvation,

C: that we may show forth your glory in the world.

P: By the cross and passion of your son, our savior,

C: bring us with all your Saints to the joy of his resurrection.

P: Let us pray,

Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in our goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

C: Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

P: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence is held for reflection.

Guide your church, O God. Accompany all Christians in this season of repentance, and renew our faith in the riches of grace you give to us in baptism.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heal this earth, O God. Satisfy the needs of every parched place, every diverse ecosystem, every suffering creature. Though all return to dust, grant beauty and purpose to each living thing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Restore the nations, O God. Let your healing spring up quickly across the world. Give all in authority the will to loose the bonds of injustice and let any who are oppressed go free.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Deliver your people, O God. Comfort any whose hearts are rent by grief, uphold any who are sick, bring food to those who hunger, and give housing to all without shelter.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Bless this assembly, O God. Reconcile us to one another and to you. Strengthen our resolve to fast from evil, open our hands in sharing, and quicken our prayer.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Hold us forever, O God. We thank you for all who now know their treasure in heaven, and for all who on earth proclaimed your abounding, steadfast love.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.
Amen.

THE EUCHARIST

*Everyone is invited to participate in Communion.
Children will receive communion or a blessing according to parental wishes.
Gluten-free wafers and juice are offered as alternatives.*

*The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also, with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give our thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*Proper Preface and Sanctus

P: 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.
By the leading of a star, he was shown to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan, you proclaimed him your beloved son, and in the miracle of water turned to wine, he revealed your glory.

*Words of Institution

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love, you sent to us Jesus, your son, who reached out to heal the sick and the suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying; This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, oh Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; To whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen

***The Lord's Prayer**

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**C: 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.

P: Taste and see that the Lord is good.

C: Amen

***Post Communion Blessing**

P: We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift and faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; For the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

THE SENDING

***Blessing**

P: Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

***Dismissal**

P: Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness,
be of good courage,
hold fast to that which is good,
render to no one evil for evil,
strengthen the faint hearted; support the weak,
honor all people,
Love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

C: Thanks be to God.