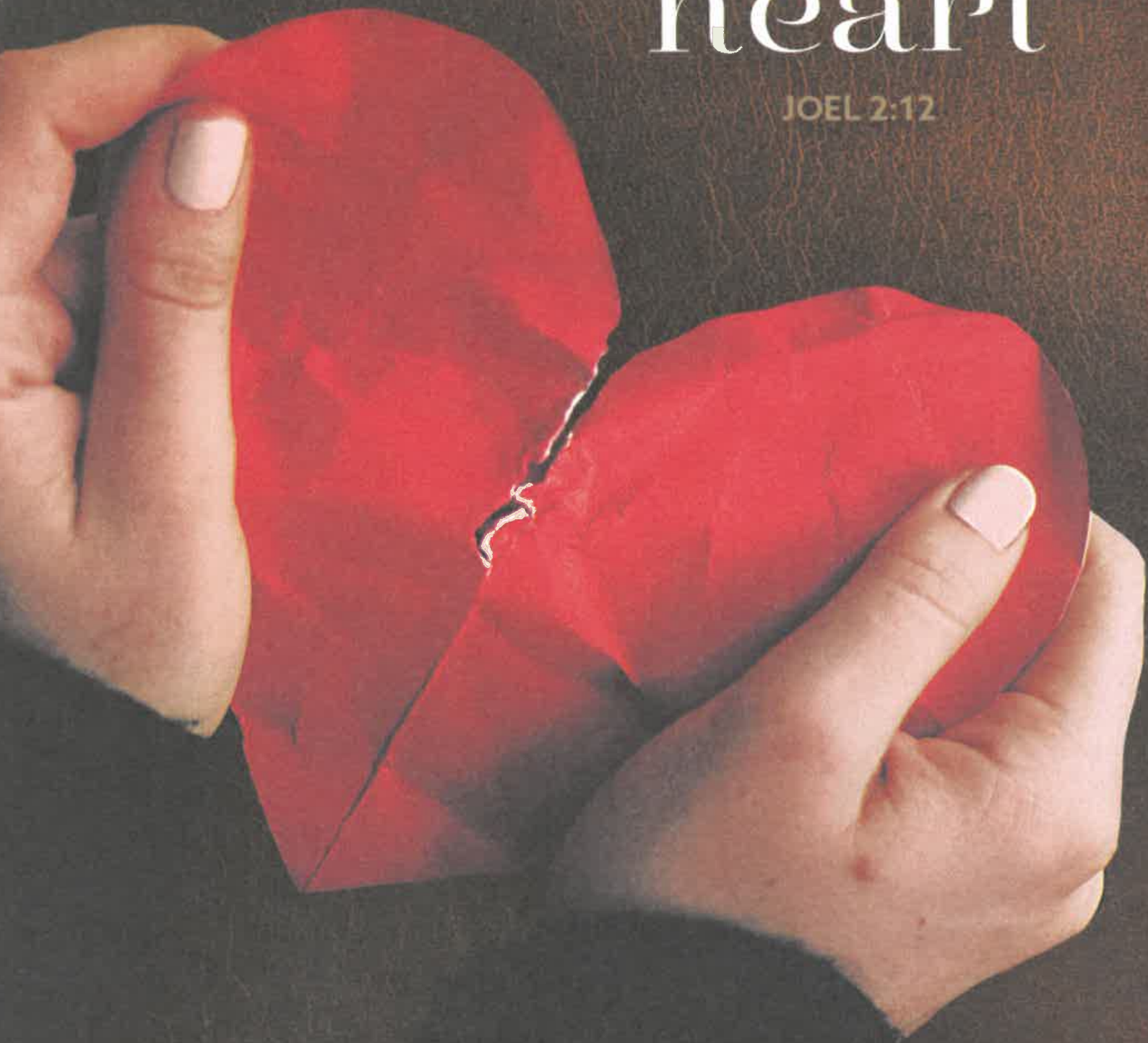


Return to God
with all your
heart

JOEL 2:12



Ash Wednesday Service
March 5, 2025
11:00 am & 7:00 pm

Welcome

Call to worship

If you have days when you feel a little bit lost and a little bit found,
then you are in the right place.

If you have days when you are desperate for rest and eager to grow,
then you are in the right place.

If you have days when your prayers could be both shouts & silence,
then you are in the right place.

God meets us here, in the messy middle of our lives.
So may we bring our full selves into this service & into this season.

With God's help, may it be so.
Let us worship our all-loving God.

Psalm 51 Celebrate pg.2

Prayer of the Day Celebrate pg.1

Hymn of the Day "Let My Spirit Always Sing" ACS #1020

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

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

Gospel Lesson Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Homily Pastor James P. Lapp

Invitation to Lent

Call to confession

Lent is a season that invites us to be intentional.
Lent asks us, *how will you go deeper these next six weeks?*
How will you grow closer to God and your neighbor?
What will you do to strengthen your faith?
Much like Christ, Lent invites us to go deeper.
Despite our best efforts,
That soul-tending work is often easier said than done.
However, instead of entering this season already feeling behind,
Let us enter this season with honesty.
Let us enter this season aware of our hopes and aware of
the challenges. Let us enter this season wrapped in God's grace.
Friends, join me in speaking honestly to God.
Join me in receiving mercy. Let us pray:

Prayer of confession

Jesus said, "Follow me."
And I said, *let me get ready.*

Jesus said, "follow me."
And I said, *just one minute!*

Jesus said, "Follow me."
And I said, *I'll be there soon!*

The invitation is simple, but the work is hard.
Jesus, forgive my delay. I want to follow you.
Turn my intentions into actions. Show me the way. Amen.

Words of forgiveness

Lent asks,
"How will you go deeper? How will you follow Christ?"

Regardless of what that journey looks like for us,

regardless of what today, tomorrow, or the next day brings,

we are not alone.

We are seen and loved by God.

We are held in grace.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Imposition of Ashes — Please come forward to the altar.

Prayer for illumination

Holy God,

Your invitation is simple.

You lean in close.

You say our name.

With joy in your voice, you invite us to follow.

But the noise of this world is distracting,

and we are afraid,

so we get stuck somewhere between

our head and our heart.

We get stuck somewhere between

our intent and our action.

So today we pray,

Speak to us again.

Tell us the story.

Invite us to follow.

Speak once more,

of good news that will not leave us alone.

Speak to us again,

for we are listening.

Amen.

Affirmation of faith

We believe in Jesus Christ,

who said to ordinary people, “Follow me,”

and with his love, changed the world.

We believe in the Holy Spirit

who tethers us to all of creation,
nudging us toward deeper and more intentional faith.
And we believe in the Creator
who brings the sun over the horizon each morning,
allowing every day to be a new beginning.

So with *this* new day,
with Jesus' invitation ringing in our ears,
and the Holy Spirit's tethering love,
we realign our hopes with our words,
our dreams with our prayers,
our intentions with our actions.
Jesus, we believe.
Guide our feet.
Amen.

Prayers

Celebrate pg. 4

Sharing of the Peace

Offering

Offertory Prayer

ELW pg. 107

Great Thanksgiving

pg. 107

Words of Institution

pg. 111

Lord's Prayer

pg. 112

Holy Communion — Please come forward to the altar.

Benediction

(We leave in silence as a sign of the humility of
the beginning of the Lenten season)

Lenten Worship Services

Continuing every Wednesday during Lent
(through April 9)

**Soup Supper 6:00 pm (Sign Up to Host)
&
Holden Evening Prayer 7:00 pm**

House Meetings—Fireside Room

"Forming a Vision for Our Future"

Sundays, March 23 & 30 at 11:30am

AND

Thursdays, March 27 & April 3 at 7:00pm

Please join with our leadership for a conversation about some of the possibilities that lay ahead for our ministry together given our numerical decline. Refer to the newsletter for more content information.

Upcoming Events:

March Benevolence Offering — Scholarship Fund

Easter Lilies for sale today through April 10

- March 6 Mens beginner A.A. Thurs. 7:00 pm Fireside
- March 7 A.A. Fridays 7:00 pm Fellowship Hall
- March 7-9 Women's Retreat Mt. Cross
Most are going just the day Saturday.
- March 11 Church Council 6:30 pm
- March 12 Lent Soupers 6:00 pm (sign up to host)**
Worship 7:00 pm
- March 22 George Webber Memorial 11:00 am
- April 17 Maundy Thursday 7:00 pm
- April 18 Good Friday 7:00 pm
- April 13 Palm Sunday Dramatic Worship—readers pls
- April 19 Easter set up 10 am
- April 20 Easter Breakfast & celebration
— sign up to help

Pastor's Office Hours: Weds. & Thur. 10:00—1:00 pm

Our Mission Statement

St. Stephen's is a welcoming, healing community who worship God in Christ, nurture people growing in faith, serve others with acceptance and love, invite people to share the joy of the spirit.

Reconciling in Christ

"We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status.

We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ."

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Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Church Musician: Gary Roberts
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens
Custodian: John Hopping
Videographers: Kent Madsen & Barb Rice

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prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org