



ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026

6:45 p.m.

Ash Wednesday begins the Christian season of Lent. We will spend the coming days journeying with Jesus toward the cross; toward the death that ultimately brings resurrection life. Many of us will spend these coming days practicing a new spiritual discipline or giving up something that seems to be getting in the way of the life we long to live. And tonight, we come together to mark the beginning of this Lenten journey.

We come together to acknowledge our sin, to acknowledge our mortality. We come to glimpse the Christ who offers forgiveness, who offers everlasting life.

As part of tonight's worship, the imposition of ashes will be offered. This practice may not be familiar to everyone. Ashes have been used in Christian churches to mark the beginning of Lent since at least the 10th Century, and ashes are mentioned in scripture as a symbol of purification and repentance. We offer the imposition of ashes tonight as a physical reminder of our mortality and sin; an assurance of God's forgiveness and salvation.

The Prelude

Maureen Howell

The Call to Worship (responsive)

Warren Howell

LEADER: We come to worship God as the Lenten season begins,
aware of our frailty and our failings.

PEOPLE: **We come seeking God's mercy,
acknowledging our mortality.**

LEADER: As we receive the waters of baptism,
we are marked now with ashes.

PEOPLE: **The treasures of this earth do not last;
our treasure is in heaven,
our heart's true home.**

The Introit (Responsive)

“Psalm 51”
Jane Marshall

Gradeschool Choir
Rhonda Lowe, dir.
Becky Mercer, flute

CHOIR: Create in me, O God, a clean heart, a clean heart.

ALL:

Cre - ate in me, O God, _ a clean _ heart, a clean _ heart,

CHOIR: Put a new and right spirit within me.

ALL:

Put a new and right spir - it with - in _____ me;

CHOIR: Create in me, O God, a clean heart, a clean heart.

ALL:

Cre - ate in me, O God, _ a clean _ heart, a
clean _ heart, a clean _ heart. _____

Words: Psalm 51:10

The Invocation

Leah Reed

*The Hymn, 451

“Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy”

ARISE

The Call to Confession

Michael Hood

In quiet trust, in simple words,
we enter a space for prayer.
As we confess our sins,
both secret and public,
the door to God’s heart is open.

The Prayer of Confession (unison)

**Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.
We have many treasures on earth that we hold too dearly;
that we withhold from others in need.
When we sin against neighbor, condone injustice,
and quarrel with one another, forgive us.
Do not see us for our faults. Keep us always in your presence.
Sustain in us a willing spirit to treasure what you desire;
then our hearts will be opened in joy and gladness.
In Jesus Christ, our Treasure, we pray. Amen.**

The Assurance of Pardon (responsive)

LEADER: God creates in us clean hearts
and gives a new and right spirit.
PEOPLE: **In the grace of Jesus Christ,
We return to God forgiven.**
ALL: **Praise God for our salvation!**

The Act of Praise

We are for - giv - en. We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to
God. Thanks be to God. We are for - giv - en. We are for -
giv - en. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

Music: Hal H. Hopson, 1995

The Hebrew Bible

Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17

Lynn Lingafelt

The Christian Testament

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

The Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Homily

Christopher Chapman

“Why Do We Want To Be Reminded of Our Condition?”

The Imposition of Ashes

Tonight we impose ashes in the shape of a cross as we speak the words, “From dust you have come, to dust you will return.” The ashes offer a sign of our sinfulness and mortality. That they are imposed in the shape of a cross offers hope for God’s gifts of forgiveness and eternal life.

*The Hymn, 200

“Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days”

LAND OF REST

*The Benediction

Leah Reed

*The Postlude

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

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