



ASH WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 18, 2026
7 P.M



Our English word "Lent" comes from an Anglo-Saxon word that means "to lengthen" and is associated with the lengthening of days in the Spring. Dating back to the fourth century, A.D., Lent is a period of reflection, abstinence, and self-denial, following the example of Jesus Christ. The color for this liturgical season is purple, which reminds us this is a time of self-examination and discipline. During these days, we prepare our hearts for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Ash Wednesday Cross by Jan Richardson

Prelude

Prelude on 'St Flavian'
Don Papenbrock, organ

Healey Willan

✠ Call to Worship
From dust we came, to dust we will return.
We belong to God.
We gather in penitence, we gather in confidence.
We belong to God.
At the beginning of Lent, at every moment of our lives,
We belong to God.

Rev. Susan Landrum

✠ Hymn 421 *Have Mercy, God, Upon My Life* IRISH

Prayer for Illumination Rev. Susan Landrum

First Lesson Psalm 103:8-14

Second Lesson Matthew 4:12-23 Rev. Kate Culver

Homily

Invitation to the Observance of the Lenten Discipline Rev. Shannon J. Kershner

Anthem *Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*
Chancel Choir, Don Papenbrock, piano Linda Cable Shute

Lord, who throughout these forty days
for us didst fast and pray,
teach us with Thee to mourn our sins
and close by Thee to stay.

As Thou didst hunger bear, and thirst,
so teach us, gracious Lord,
to die to self, and chiefly live
by Thy most holy word.

And through these days of penitence,
and through Thy passion-tide,
yes, evermore in life and death,
Jesus, with us abide.

Litany of Penitence Rev. Shannon J. Kershner and Rev. Susan Landrum

Holy and merciful God, 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, O God.

We have not listened to 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, O God.

We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness, the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives;

We confess to you, O God.

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

We confess to you, O God.

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

We confess to you, O God.

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

We confess to you, O God.

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

We confess to you, O God.

Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrong we have done; for our neglect of human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty;

Accept our repentance, O God.

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, O God.

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

Accept our repentance, O God.

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us. Favorably hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

Amen.

The Imposition of Ashes

Rev. Shannon J. Kershner, Rev. Kate Culver
and Rev. Susan Landrum

Siblings, may these ashes be to us an acknowledgement of our mortality and penitence. For we are dust, and to dust we shall return. As they are placed on our forehead, may they be for us both the seeds of our repentance and of our transformation. During this time of Lent, may God create within each of us a clean heart and a new and right spirit.

Hymn 433

Sign Us with Ashes

PHOENIX

Kelly Grba, Cantor

(The cantor will sing the verses. Congregation, please sing the refrain)

Sign us with ashes, merciful God, children of dust, as to dust we return.

Sign us with ashes, merciful God.

Mark us and make us your own.

The Lord's Prayer

Traditional PC(USA)

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

✠ Hymn 720

Jesus Calls Us

GALILEE

✠ Closing Responses

Rev. Kate Culver

Choose this day whom you will serve;

We will choose the Living God.

The road is narrow the leads to life;

We will walk the way of Christ.

Faith is not our holding on;

Faith is letting go.

We offer more than words, O God;

We offer you our lives.

✠ Benediction

Central Presbyterian Church Staff

The Rev. Shannon Johnson Kershner, Senior Pastor & Head of Staff

The Rev. Kate Culver, Associate Pastor

The Rev. Susan Landrum, Associate Pastor

Thom Dixon, Director of Music & Worship Arts

Don Papenbrock, Organist & Choral Accompanist

Kristie Johns, Director of Financial Operations

Melissa Johnson, Executive Assistant & Event Coordinator

John White, Facilities Manager

Abraha Diedre, Custodian

Karen Brown, Pianist, Nazareth & Jerusalem Choirs

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