

Ash Wednesday Service

February 18, 2026

7:00 p.m.

The Prelude O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß, BWV 622 J. S. Bach

The beginning of the service will be denoted by the ringing of a bell.

The Call to Worship

God sent Christ into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

God's love endures forever.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though the waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

God's love endures forever.

God abides with us and teaches us to die to self and to live repentant lives.

God's love endures forever. We return, we remember, and we will listen well. Let us worship God.

*Hymn *Forty Days and Forty Nights* 77

*The Call to Confession

We have all sinned. God says to us, "Repent sincerely and return to me with fasting and weeping and mourning. Let your broken heart show your sorrow." Let us turn to God in repentance and confess our sin.

*The Prayer of Confession

**Have mercy on us, O God, according to your unfailing love;
According to your great compassion, blot out our transgressions.
Wash away all our iniquity and cleanse us from our sin.
Our sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
A broken and contrite heart you will not despise.
Create in us a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within us. [Silent Confession.]**

*The Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news! The Lord our God is kind and full of mercy; he is patient and keeps his promise; he is always ready to forgive and not punish. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

Hymn *Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples* 434

The Prayer

Lord of All, on this dark day, may we have just enough light to carry on. On this opening into the time of Lent, may we know just enough hope to do the hard things we need to do. May we leave this day ready to be refined by the power that leads inevitably to the light of Easter morn.

Here on Lent's threshold, we prepare to make a heap of ashes - a place where our struggling faith can sit down and mark out gray crosses as reminders of the cost love always pays for yesterdays and tomorrows even as we share in the words you taught us to always pray, saying together,

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 sins as we forgive those who sin 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. AMEN.

The Anthem Create in Me C. F. Mueller
Combined Choirs

The Scripture Reading Joel 2:12-17 1304

The Sermon "Where is God" Rev. Ted McCulloch

The Litany of Ashes

We bow our heads before you, O God, aware of our sinfulness and our shortcomings. Remembering our baptism, the watermark of the cross upon us, we also receive this ashen cross upon our foreheads, another sign that in life and in death, we belong to you. In the name of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and coming again, we pray. Amen.

The Imposition of Ashes

*Hymn *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy* 298

*Charge & Benediction

May the Lord send us forth on this journey and call us to faithful discipleship.

Call us forward to repentance and new life.

Call us forward to listen and to hear God's Word.

Call us to serve and respond in the Lord's Way.

Call us to live always with hope and love.

The conclusion of the service will be denoted by the ringing of a bell.

Please exit in silence at the tolling of the bell.

Thank You to First Presbyterian Church and Rev. Ted [McCulloch](#) for this special combined worship service. We would also like to thank First and Second Presbyterian Church Choirs under the direction of Thomas Heidenreich.

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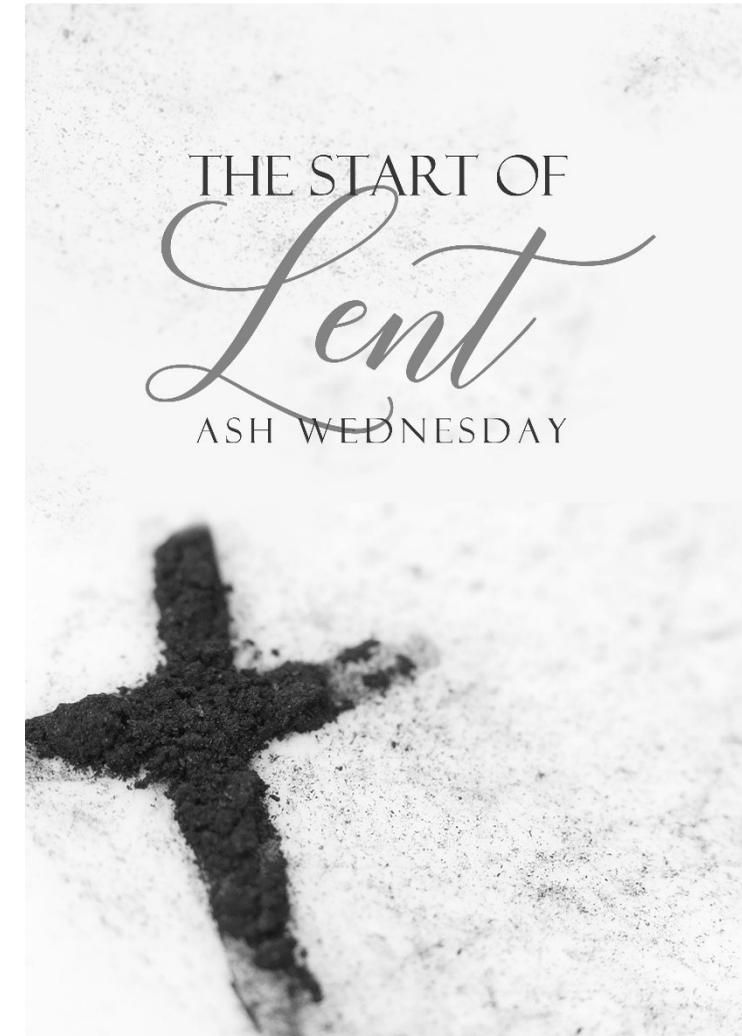
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Seeking and Serving Christ, We are a Place for Growing Christians.