

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026

Service led by Ellen Locke and Revd Shirley Cole

Organist: Bonnie LaFrance



Opening Hymn "Sunday's Palms are Wednesday's Ashes"
The Gathering of the Community p 281

Opening Sentence

If today you hear God's voice, harden not your heart.
~ Psalm 95:7-8

Collect of the Day p 281

The Proclamation of the Word

Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalm 103:8-18 p 842

2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10

Gradual Hymn "O God, How We Have Wandered"

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Reflection

Hymn "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" #649

Prayers p 281

Psalm 51:1-18 p 282

Litany of Penitence p 283

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The Blessing

God's blessing be with you. Christ's peace be with you.
The Spirit's outpouring be with you, now and always. Amen

Closing Hymn "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" #486

The Dismissal

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

LENT IS A TIME FOR FASTING...AND FEASTING

Fast from judging others; feast on the Christ dwelling in them.
Fast from emphasis on differences; feast on the unity of all life.
Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light.
Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify.
Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude.
Fast from anger; feast on patience.
Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism.
Fast from worry; feast on trust.
Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.
Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives.
Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer.
Fast from hostility; feast on non-violence.
Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others.
Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal Truth.
Fast from discouragement; feast on hope.
Fast from facts that depress; feast on truths that uplift.
Fast from lethargy; feast on enthusiasm.
Fast from suspicion; feast on truth.
Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire.
Fast from shadows of sorrow; feast on the sunlight of serenity.
Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence.
Fast from problems that overwhelm; feast on prayer that undergirds.

*Lord Jesus, during this season of fasting and feasting,
gift us with your presence, so we can be a gift to others
in carrying out your work. Amen.*

~ Attributed to William Arthur Ward

A READING FROM ISAIAH 58:1-12

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practised righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they delight to draw near to God. "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

PSALM 103:8-18

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,*

slow to anger and of great kindness

He will not always accuse us,*

nor will he keep his anger forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins,*

nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,*

so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west,*

so far has he removed our sins from us.

As a father cares for his children,*

so does the Lord care for those who fear him.

For he himself knows whereof we are made;*

he remembers that we are but dust.

Our days are like the grass;*

we flourish like a flower of the field;

When the wind goes over it, it is gone,*

and its place shall know it no more.

But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures forever

on those who fear him,*

and his righteousness on children's children;

On those who keep his covenant*

and remember his commandments and do them.

God of infinite mercy and forgiveness, by the cross and resurrection of Jesus your Son, wash away our sins and deliver us from our infirmities of body and spirit, that we may live with him his risen life, to the praise and glory of your holy name.

A READING FROM 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20B-6:10

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the

day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see - we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 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. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 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. 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. And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 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. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for

yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

SUNDAY'S PALMS ARE WEDNESDAY'S ASHES

1. Sunday's palms are Wednesday's ashes, as another Lent begins; thus we kneel before our Maker in contrition for our sins.
We have marred baptismal pledges, in rebellion gone astray;
now, returning, seek forgiveness; grant us pardon, God, this day!
2. We have failed to love our neighbours, their offences to forgive, have not listened to their troubles, nor have cared just how they live.
We are jealous, proud, impatient, loving over much our things;
may the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.
3. We are hasty to judge others, blind to proof of human need; and our lack of understanding demonstrates our inner greed;
We have wasted earth's resources; want and suffering we've ignored;
Come and cleanse us, then restore us;
make new hearts within us, Lord!

O GOD, HOW WE HAVE WANDERED

1. O God, how we have wandered and hidden from your face; in foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace.
But how, in exile dwelling, we turn with fear and shame, as distant but compelling, you call us each by name.
2. And now at length discerning the evil that we do, by faith we are returning with hope and trust in you.
In haste you come to meet us, and home rejoicing bring, in gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.
3. O God of all the living, both banished and restored, compassionate, forgiving, our peace and hope assured.
Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease.
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace.