

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE
February 18, 2026—7 p.m.
A Service of Invitation

The invitation of the Shofar -- The blast of the Shofar in worship comes out of our Jewish heritage. It is a raw, emotional sound expressing our need and reliance on God's mercy. As a spiritual wakeup call, the sound is a call to self-reflection, waking ourselves from spiritual slumber. It is a soul-stirring invitation to return to God.

PRELUDE "Adagio" Sheryl Monnier, Oboe
(2nd movement of the Concerto in D minor for oboe)
by Alessandro Marcello.

INVITATION TO RETURN Rev. Boruff
(*Shofar is played.*)

ONE: Get ready; get ready to return to God. Place your trust in God and God alone!

(*Shofar is played.*)

ONE: Return to the Lord!

ALL: It is not easy to return to God; we have had our way for so long.

ONE: Blow the trumpet.

(*Shofar is played.*)

ONE: Sound the alarm. Call the young and the old; tell everyone that the Lord is coming.

ALL: It is not easy to talk about the Lord to people who have heard our preaching so many times.

ONE: Call for a fast.

ALL: Fasting is not easy; we hunger for so many things.

ONE: Nobody said it would be easy. But we must return to the Lord. The Coming of the Lord is near!

ALL: We commit to turn from our old ways.

ONE: It will not be easy.

ALL: We will turn our lives over to the One who makes a way.

ONE: It will not be easy.

ALL: Nobody said it would be easy, but we must return to the Lord!

(*Shofar is played.*)

HYMN "Only Trust Him" #337

1. Come, every soul by sin oppressed,
there's mercy with the Lord;
and he will surely give you rest, by trusting in his Word.
Refrain:

Only trust him, only trust him, only trust him now.
He will save you, he will save you, he will save you now.

3. Yes, Jesus is the truth the way
that leads you into rest;
believe in him without delay, and you are fully blest.
(Refrain)

INVITATION TO PRAY Rev. White

ONE: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with each of you.

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who repent. You are the source of all grace and mercy. Create in us new and repentant hearts, that we may come to you seeking forgiveness for our sins, and may receive from you forgiveness, reconciliation, and transformation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

SACRED WORD Joel 2:1-2, 12-13 (NLT) Rev. Mendenhall
(*Shofar is played.*)

SACRED WORD Amos 5:6-7, 14-15 (NLT) Rev. White
(*Shofar is played.*)

SACRED WORD Isaiah 1:16-18 (NLT) Rev. Mendenhall

ANTHEM "Prayer of Peace" Sanctuary Choir

SACRED WORD Luke 14:16-18a (NLT) Rev. Boruff
¹⁶ Jesus replied with this story: "A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations. ¹⁷ When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to tell the guests, 'Come, the banquet is ready.' ¹⁸ But they all began making excuses.

HYMN "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross" #301
1. Jesus, keep me near the cross; there a precious fountain,
free to all, a healing stream, flows from Calvary's mountain.
Refrain:

In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever,
till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.

2. Near the cross, a trembling soul,
love and mercy found me;
there the bright and morning star
heds its beams around me. Refrain)

INVITATION TO OBSERVE LENT Rev. Mendenhall

INVITATION TO REPENT Pastors
(*Shofar is played.*)

ONE: Awaken our hearts, minds and spirits, O God, to our need to be closer to you.

ALL: We confess to you and to one another, that we lack any righteousness of our own, that we are unworthy of your love. We have often failed to be your people, by our own fault, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

ONE: 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.

ALL: Have mercy on us, Lord.

ONE: Too often, we have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us.

ALL: Have mercy on us, Lord.

ONE: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: our pride, our hypocrisy, and the impatience of our lives,

ALL: We confess to you, Lord.

ONE: Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

ALL: We confess to you, Lord.

ONE: Our lack of prayer and worship, and our failure to share a witness to others of the faith that is in us,

ALL: We confess to you, Lord.

ONE: Forgive us, Lord, for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to cruelty,

ALL: Accept our repentance, Lord.

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

ALL: Accept our repentance, Lord.

ONE: Restore us, O Lord, and accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

ALL: That we may radiate your love in the world.

ONE: The Lord is patient with us, not wanting any to perish,....

INVITATION TO RECEIVE THE ASHES

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Rev. White

INVITATION

Rev. White

*RECEIVE THE ASHES

Pastors

You are invited to any of the three stations to receive the ashes. Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

HYMN "Just as I Am" #357

You are invited to come forward to receive the ashes.

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

2. Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3. Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

4. Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

5. Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

6. Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

CLOSING PRAYER (unison) Rev. Boruff
**Lord, Jesus Christ, you loved us while we were
yet sinners, and have called us to love others,
to bring hope to a broken world. Help us each
day to be your people and to live lives of
uncommon faith and love. You are our God,
now and forever. Amen.**

*HYMN "O Jesus, I Have Promised" #396
1. O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;
be thou forever near me, my Master and my friend.
I shall not fear the battle if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my guide.

2. O let me feel thee near me! The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me, around me and within;
but Jesus, draw thou nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

(Shofar is played.)

*INVITATION TO CARRY CHRIST TO THE WORLD
Created from dust, held together by God's
extravagant love,
**We are ready. We turn away from sin, and
leave tonight embracing God's love.**

^Please stand as you are able.

*Leave now entering into the Season of Lent —
prayer, fasting, repentance — that leads to our
ultimate Joy—the Resurrection!*

THANK YOU
for assisting in worship!
Worship Leaders: Rev. Dale Mendenhall,
Rev. Dr. Brian White & Rev. Corinne Boruff
Music: Sheryl Monnier, Sanctuary Choir
Shofar: Nate Hochstetler
Sound Tech: Mark Murray; Visual Tech: Matt Stout

TONIGHT IS JUST THE BEGINNING

of the Lenten Journey.

The Lenten journey is a 40-day spiritual pilgrimage we
undertake from Ash Wednesday to Easter to prepare our hearts
and minds for the Resurrection. It focuses on repentance,
renewal, and drawing closer to God through prayer, fasting, and
giving, symbolizing Jesus' 40 days in the desert.

Join us as we prepare together for the Resurrection!

LENTEN STUDY

"An Unlikely Lent" by Rachel Billups

There is still time to join a study!
Don't miss out on this powerful opportunity!
Multiple Days, Times, Locations and Leaders are available.

HOLY Week

Palm Sunday, March 29 @ 10 a.m.

Eggstravaganza, Sat. March 21 @ 11:30 a.m.
Downtown Fellowship Hall

Holy Thursday, April 2 @ 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday Tenebrae, April 3 @ 7:00 p.m.

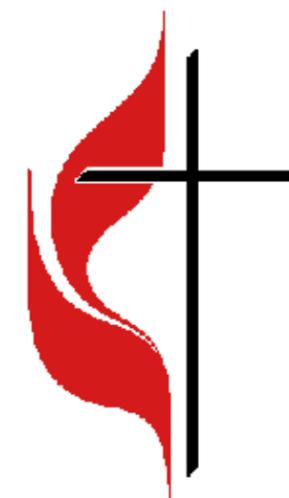
EASTER, April 5

Easter Sunrise Service @ 7 a.m. at Lodge, Davis Park
Music: Michele Murray
Easter Breakfast @ 7:30 a.m. at Lodge, Davis Park
Easter Traditional Celebration @ 10 a.m.
Downtown Sanctuary
Holy Communion
Music: Sanctuary Choir & Brass



First United Methodist

FAITH FIRST. FAMILIES FIRST. ANDERSON FIRST.



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Lead Pastor: Rev. Corinne Boruff
Associate Pastor: Rev. Dr. Brian White
Guest Pastor: Rev. Dale Mendenhall
Director of Family Ministries: Ally Hall
Ministers: Congregation