

Ash Wednesday



MARCH 5, 2025 | 7 PM

THE DESERT WAITS

The desert waits,
ready for those who come,
who come obedient to the Spirit's leading;
or who are driven,
because they will not come any other way.

The desert always waits,
ready to let us know who we are –
the place of self-discovery.

and while we fear, and rightly,
the loneliness and emptiness
and harshness,
we forget the angels
whom we cannot see for our blindness,
but who come when God decides
that we need their help;
when we are ready
for what they can give us.

Ruth Burgess in *Eggs And Ashes*.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

March 5, 2025 | 7 PM | McKee Chapel

SOUNDING THE HOUR

WELCOME

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We choose afresh this night,

People: The One whom we will serve.

Leader: We choose the living God.

People: The road is narrow that leads to life;

Leader: We walk the way of Jesus.

People: Faith is not our holding on;

Leader: Faith is our letting go.

People: Here at the start of our Lenten journey,

Leader: We offer more than words, O God.

All: We offer you our lives.

† HYMN #167

“Forty Days and Forty Nights” *Aus der Tiefe Rufe Ich*

PRAYER OF PREPARATION *(in unison)*

Truly dust we are, and to dust we shall return; and truly yours we are, and to you we shall return. Help this to be a time of turning round and beginning afresh. Through the forty days of Lent, help us to follow you and to find you: in the discipline of praying; in the privilege of caring; in all the ways we set ourselves to learn and do. Help us to discover you everywhere – in our loneliness and in community, in our emptiness and our fulfilment, in our sadness and our laughter, in our receiving and our sharing your abundance. Help us to find you when we are lost, and especially when we are self-satisfied. Help us to follow you on the journey to Jerusalem, to the waving palms of the people’s hope, to their confusion and rejection, to the cross and empty tomb. Help us to perceive new growth amid the ashes of the old. Help us, carrying your cross, to be signs of your Beloved Community on Earth. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 15:11-13 | Pew Bible Page 850

REFLECTION

INVITATION TO THE LENTEN JOURNEY

*Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and
with mourning;
rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the Lord, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in
steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.*

Joel 2:12-13

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

PRAYER OF DEPARTURE *(in unison)*

Lord Jesus, desert dweller, help us now at this time of Lent, to accompany you. If we have grown soft, cushioning our lives with excuses, expose us to the toughness of your way. If we have grown lazy, cushioning our minds with easy, thin thoughts, expose us to the rigor of your truth. If we have grown comfortable, cushioning our living with satisfaction and success, expose us to the challenge of your life. As we walk, God, be our way. As we learn, God, be our truth. As we grow, God, be our life. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

† HYMN #213

"In the Cross of Christ I Glory" *Rathbun*

† BENEDICTION

Liturgy adapted from Eggs And Ashes, Ruth Burgess, Editor

THE ASH WEDNESDAY TRADITION

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent leading to the celebration of Easter Day. Ashes are placed on the foreheads of believers as an indication of repentance, renewal, and reflection upon the death of Jesus and our own mortality. Lent consists of forty days plus six Sundays. The final week, called Holy Week, begins with Palm Sunday (April 13) and includes services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, culminating in the celebration of Easter (April 20).

During worship this evening, you will be invited to receive the imposition of ashes on your forehead, hearing the words of scripture,

**“Remember that you are dust
and to dust you shall return.”**

Genesis 3:19



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