



KIRKWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

February 18, 2026 7:00 P.M.
A SERVICE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

GATHERING

PRELUDE

*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 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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

*HYMN NO. 654

“Change My Heart, O God”

Celebration Hymnal

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Gracious God, we pause for a moment, to pay attention to the gift you give. By your Spirit, your Word is made new. In the hearing of Scripture, may we be inclined to speak the truth in loving kindness, obey the law of your love, and to keep your peace that passes all understanding. Amen.

FIRST READING

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Fran McCormick

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near - a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

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. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Reader: The word of the Lord. **People: Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Dr. Yvan Kelly

"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.

Reader: The word of the Lord. **People: Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

"Together We Journey"

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE

Beloved people of God, every year during this time of Lent, we celebrate our redemption through the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lent is a season to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life together in the mystery of a crucified and risen, living Lord. We begin this season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We will begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes. Tonight, you will be marked with ash in the sign of a cross. You will hear the words from Scripture, “From dust you came. To dust you shall return. Be at peace.” This ancient sign and ritual speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, the truth of our impermanence, and the need for Christ’s love and light. The sign with which we are marked reveals our desire to live repentant lives, individually and as a community, and our hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: 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.

Leader: 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,

People: Have mercy on us, O God.

Leader: We have not listened to Your call to serve as Christ served us,

People: Have mercy on us, O God.

Leader: We confess to You, O God, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,

People: We confess to You, O God.

Leader: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways,

People: We confess to You, O God.

Leader: Our anger, our own frustration, and our envy of other people,

People: We confess to You, O God.

Leader: Our love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

People: We confess to You, O God.

Leader: Our negligence in prayer and worship,

People: We confess to You, O God.

Leader: Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrongs we have done. For our neglect of human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

People: Accept our repentance, O God.

Leader: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

People: Accept our repentance, O God.

Leader: Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

People: Hear our prayers, O God, for Your mercy is great.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*unison*)

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.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

From dust we came, to dust we shall return; but we sing “Alleluia” at the grave because death is not the end, only a sign of an impending resurrection. May these ashes tonight be for us a sign of our mortality, a desire for repentance, and a reminder that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Those who wish to receive the ashes are invited to the Table.

A silence is kept as the ashes are imposed.

SENDING

*HYMN NO. 186

“Lord, Be Glorified”

Celebration Hymnal

*BENEDICTION

As we leave this place marked with a sign of the cross, remember that our call as disciples in this Lenten season is to live a repentant life and to seek the good for all of creation. Life is short, and we do not have long with those whom we love. Don't delay to love. Be quick to be kind. And may the love of One God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us, now and forever. Amen.

All quietly depart.

**Please stand as you are able*

Song credits: “Change My Heart, O God” – Eddie Espinosa © 1982 Heart And Harp Worship.; “Lord, Be Glorified” - Bob Kilpatrick © 1978 The Lorenz Corporation. Both hymns used by permission. CCLI License #11509317.



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