

KIRK IN THE HILLS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
ASH WEDNESDAY 7:30 P.M.
FEBRUARY 18, 2026





Praying With Jesus

Welcome to Kirk in the Hills. Whether you are deeply rooted in this congregation or simply exploring faith, we are honored that you are here tonight. Lent begins in humility—with ashes, silence, and the steady reminder that we are dust, yet beloved.

In *Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21*, Jesus speaks plainly: “When you pray...” He does not say *if*. And yet prayer is often one of the most perplexing aspects of Christian life. We question its purpose. We wrestle with distraction. We fear we are doing it wrong. We long for evidence that it matters.

Lent invites us to bring those struggles into the light. The disciples themselves needed instruction. Prayer is not performance. It is not a spiritual achievement. It is a relationship—life with the Father made possible through the Son and animated by the Spirit.

Over the coming weeks, we will learn to pray by watching Jesus pray. In solitude and in crowds. In gratitude and in grief. In clarity and in agony. In each moment, prayer anchors him in divine love and strengthens him for faithful obedience. What it did in him, it promises to do in us.

The hope of this season is simple and profound: through prayer, the living presence, power, and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ are not distant ideals but present realities. We begin in ashes. We walk toward resurrection. And along the way, we learn to pray.

Upcoming Sundays in Lent

March 1 – “Prayer in the Wilderness” – Matthew 4:1–11

March 8 – “Teach Us to Pray” – Luke 11:1–13

March 15 – “When You Pray: The Lord’s Prayer” – Matthew 6:7–15

March 22 – “Prayer and Compassion” – Mark 1:29–39

March 29 – “Prayer in Suffering” – Luke 22:39–46

April 5 – “That They May Be One” – John 17:20–26

If you are seeking, questioning, or beginning again, you are welcome here. Let us walk these forty days together.

In Christ,

Sr. Pastor | Head of Staff | Kirk in the Hills

THE SERVICE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

7:30 p.m., Sanctuary | A Service of Word, Sermon, Confession and Imposition of Ashes

PRELUDE

Variations on a Handel Sarabande

G. F. Handel/James Biery

WELCOME

Rev. Edwin Estevez

* *Please rise in body or spirit at the ringing of the tower bell.*

* **INTROIT**

Gracious God, Our Way in the Wilderness

arr. M. Biery

*God, our way in the wilderness,
Guide us, by your Word, through these forty days,
So that we may be restored, renewed,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

* **CALL TO WORSHIP**

adapted from Joel 2 and the Psalms

Rev. Jasmine Smart

Return to the Lord with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.

**For the Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

The Lord knows our frame
and remembers that we are dust.

**Yet the mercy of the Lord endures forever.
Let us worship God.**

* **PROCESSIONAL HYMN 167**

Forty Days and Forty Nights

AUS DER TIEFE RUF E ICH

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Rev. Jasmine Smart

Almighty and gracious God,
Out of your love and mercy
You breathed into dust the breath of life,
Creating us to serve you and one another.
Call forth our prayers and acts of tenderness,
And strengthen us to face our mortality,
That we may reach with confidence for your mercy;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. Amen.

* **PSALTER: HYMN 421**

Have Mercy, God, upon My Life (Psalm 51)

IRISH

* **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Rev. Jasmine Smart

**Gracious God,
our sins are too heavy to carry,
too real to hide, and too deep to undo.
Forgive what our lips tremble to name,
what our hearts can no longer bear,
and what has become for us
a consuming fire of judgment.
Set us free from a past we cannot change;
open us to a future in which we can be changed;
and grant us grace to grow in your likeness and image,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Kyrie

John Merbecke



Lord, have mer-cy up-on us; Christ, have mer-cy up-on us; Lord, have mer-cy up-on us.

THE OBSERVANCE OF LENT

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Book of Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17

Rev. Dr. Edwin Estevez

INVITATION

Dear friends in Christ,
the early Christians observed with great devotion
the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection,
and it became the custom of the Church
to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting.
This season of Lent provides a time
for self-examination and repentance,
for prayer, fasting, and self-denial,
and for reading and meditating on God's holy Word.
I invite you, therefore,
to observe a holy Lent.

LITANY OF PENITENCE

Rev. Dr. Edwin Estevez & Rev. Jasmine Smart

Lord, hear us as we confess our sins and shortcomings.
We have not loved you with our whole heart,
mind, and strength.
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We have not listened to your call to serve
as Christ served us.
We have not been true to the mind of Christ.
We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Accept our repentance, O God,
for the wrongs we have done,
for our neglect of, or apathy to, human need and suffering,
and for our prejudice and contempt
toward those who differ from us.

Accept our repentance, O God.

Favorably hear us, gracious Lord,
for your mercy is great.

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Jasmine Smart

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.
Hear the Gospel:

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

In Jesus Christ, we become a new creation!

Praise to you, Lord Jesus!

MOTET

Lord, For Thy Tender Mercy's Sake

att. to Richard Farrant

*Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake, lay not our sins to our charge, but forgive
that is past, and give us grace to amend our sinful lives; to decline from sin
and incline to virtue, that we may walk in an upright heart before thee now
and evermore. Amen.*

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10

Rev. Dr. Edwin Estevez

SOLO

Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not (from Cantata 21)

J. S. Bach

*Sighing, crying, sorrow, need,
anxious yearning, fear and death
gnaw at this my anguished heart;
I am filled with grieving, hurt.*

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

Rev. Jasmine Smart

MOMENT OF SILENCE

MEDITATION

Praying with Jesus: Forgive

Rev. Dr. Edwin Estevez

* HYMN OF RESPONSE 435

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

IN BABIL

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those who wish may come forward to receive ashes on their foreheads or hands.

Words used at the Imposition:

*Remember that you are dust,
And to dust you shall return.*

You may respond with... **Thanks be to God.**

MOTET

Miserere mei, Deus

David Hurd

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.
Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.
And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgment.
Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother's womb.
For behold, you look for truth deep within me,
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.*

*Make me hear of joy and gladness,
 that the body you have broken may rejoice.
 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.
 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
 Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me.
 Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful
 Spirit.
 I shall teach your ways to the wicked, and sinners shall return to you.
 Deliver me from death, O God,
 and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.
 Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,
 but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
 a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
 Be favorable and gracious to Zion, and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
 Then you will be pleased with the appointed sacrifices,
 With burnt-offerings and oblations; then shall they offer young bullocks upon
 your altar.
 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness;
 in your great compassion blot out my offenses. (Psalm 51)*

PRAYER AFTER IMPOSITION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Jasmine Smart

Gracious God,
 You have marked us with the sign of our mortality
 And claimed us again by your mercy.
 Walk with us through these forty days,
 That repentance may lead to renewal,
 And the cross may lead us to life;
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray saying:
**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.**

*** CLOSING HYMN 676**

Day Is Done

AR HYD Y NOS

BLESSING AND CHARGE

SILENT RECESSIONAL

The congregation departs in silence.

TITHES AND OFFERING

Your offering for the Kirk's ministry will be received as you leave worship. Our giving is an offering to God. All offerings are part of our worship of God and are used to support the Kirk's ministry. Text "KITH" to 73256 to give using your mobile device.

INFORMATION ON TODAY'S SERVICES

Musicians:

Merideth Hite Estevez, oboe

Chantel Woodard, soprano

Kirk Schola: Jamie Jurado, Rachel Hiatt, sopranos; Courtney Jolley, Trinity Green, altos; Alden Rohwer, Nathan Davey, tenors; Jinho Park, Terry Farmer, basses

James Biery, organ

Marilyn Biery, music coordinator

About the cover art: Ash | Mike Moyers, 2016 | used within permissions and obtained at *Art in the Christian Tradition*, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. "A painting depicting the cross of ashes imposed on Ash Wednesday. The painting style conveys the themes of mortality, brokenness, and our need of God's grace."



1340 West Long Lake Road 
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302
(248) 626-2515 
kirkinthehills.org 
facebook.com/kirkinthehills 