



the good news is..

all are invited

## **Ash Wednesday**

February 18, 2026 — 12:00<sup>PM</sup>

Welcome to

**First Presbyterian Church**



Welcome to this sanctuary.  
Welcome to this time of worship and wonder.  
Welcome to this family of faith.

We're glad you're here today and pray that your experience  
with us in worship is both challenging and uplifting!

*Our ushers are available to assist you as needed.*

For more information about First Presbyterian Church, we invite you  
to visit our website. There you will find out the ways to keep in touch,  
how we live our faith, our different partnerships and so much more.

Our website address is: [www.firstpresracine.org](http://www.firstpresracine.org)

If you're interested in receiving news about the church,  
please call 262.632.1686 or email: [shelley@firstpresracine.org](mailto:shelley@firstpresracine.org)

**Rev. Darren Utley—Church Pastor**  
[\*pastordarren@firstpresracine.org\*](mailto:pastordarren@firstpresracine.org)

TODAY'S SERVICE  
PASTOR—*Rev. Darren Utley*  
MEDIA SPECIALIST—*Steve Comeau*

\*Please stand as you are able.

[**Bold type**] indicates text to be spoken by the congregation.

[***Bold italic type***] indicates song to be sung by the congregation.



## WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

*(As a courtesy to everyone, please mute your mobile device.)*

### PRELUDE

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Welcome! May you find God's love, peace, grace, and joy as we worship today.*

### POEM

#### **The Gospel According to Mrs. Farnell's Pre-K Class | *Rev. Sarah Speed***

In Pre-K the whole class gets an invite to Tommy's birthday.  
He places the paper invites in our cubbies.  
There's a helter-skelter sticker sealing each one,  
proof that tiny hands did the work.  
So we, the members of Mrs. Farnell's Pre-K class,  
arrive at the park on Saturday.  
We arrive whether or not we've ever built a sandcastle with Tommy.  
We arrive whether or not we've ever shared half of our PB&J at lunch.  
We arrive at the park on Saturday, with pigtails and balloons,  
because we were *invited*.  
And together we play tag, and we eat birthday cake,  
and we run barefoot in the grass.

Together, we sing *Happy birthday to youuuuuu*,  
so excited we can barely stand still.  
Together, we momentarily forget  
that Chloe never gets picked  
for Red Rover and that Quinn cried in class last week,  
because the park is not the playground and everyone was invited.  
And when we load into our cars at the end of the day,  
with grass-stained knees,  
chocolate frosting on our faces,  
and the awareness of inclusion,  
we say to our parents,  
*This was the best day of my life.*

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

If God threw a party,  
**all would be invited.**  
If God hosted a dinner,  
**there'd be a seat saved for each of us.**  
If God prepared a banquet,  
**a cheer would go up when you arrived.**  
This is the good news:  
**God is throwing a party.**  
**God is hosting a dinner.**  
**God is preparing a banquet,**  
**and all are invited.**  
Let us worship this invitational God.

\*HYMN

**Be Thou My Vision**  
[GtG Hymn #450]

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Family of faith,  
if someone declines our invitations again and again,  
in our human ways,  
we tend to stop inviting them.  
We get the hint.  
We assume they'd rather be elsewhere.  
With God, however, things are different.  
No matter how many times we overlook or  
ignore God's outstretched hand,  
God will never stop reaching for us.  
So with that good news in mind,  
let us go to God in prayer.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Gracious God,**  
**you invite all of us to your table:**  
**the faithful and the doubting,**  
**the restless and the hopeless,**  
**the addicted and the lonely,**  
**the lost and the confused.**  
**You invite all of us,**  
**regardless of who we are or where we've been,**  
**but we fail to do the same.**  
**When given the opportunity,**  
**we are guilty of casting judgment on our neighbors.**  
**We draw lines, assume the worst,**  
**create cliques,**  
**and accept exclusion.**  
**Forgive our harmful ways.**  
**This Lent, show us how to love others the way you love us.**  
**With hope we pray, amen.**

## WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, no matter how many times we mess up,  
no matter how many times we lose our way,  
no matter how many times we decline God's invitation,  
God will never stop inviting us to the table.  
There is and always will be a seat saved for you.  
So join me in these good news words:

**We are forgiven, again and again.**  
**We are invited, again and again.**  
**We are loved, from beginning to end.**  
**Thanks be to God, our Inviter. Amen.**

## PROCLAIMING THE WORD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Table-setting God,  
this Lent we do not want to miss your invitation.  
We do not want to be so caught up in our own business  
that we miss the holiness right in front of us.  
So settle our hearts,  
and open our spirits to hear your word anew.  
Help us hear your good news today.  
With hope we pray,  
amen.

### SCRIPTURE

Luke 9:51-62

[NT 70-71]

### HOMILY

**The good news is... all are invited**  
*Rev. Darren Utley*

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

## GOING FORTH TO MINISTER

\*BENEDICTION

As Christ welcomed everyone,  
no matter what their background or social standing;  
as Christ welcomed enemies & friends, outcasts & leaders,  
foreigners & neighbors,  
let us open our hearts and homes and lives.  
Let us be like Christ to everyone we meet.  
Peace be with you.  
**And also with you.**

*We invite you to join us for a light lunch in Ihrman Hall*

LITURGY & POEM BY REV. SARAH A. SPEED | A SANCTIFIED ART LLC | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

### This week...

|                             |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Wed., Feb. 18 <sup>th</sup> | 12:00 <sup>PM</sup><br>12:30 <sup>PM</sup><br>4:00 <sup>PM</sup> | Ash Wednesday Service<br>Lunch in Ihrman Hall<br>Food Pantry |
| Sun., Feb. 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 9:30 <sup>AM</sup><br>10:40 <sup>AM</sup>                        | First Sunday of Lent Worship<br>Fellowship                   |

## Prayer Matters

Heartfelt thoughts & prayers for the Herrera-Leavell family with the recent loss of Aunt Josephine, and all who have recently experienced the loss of a friend or family member. May they know peace and comfort during these difficult times.

Prayers of comfort & healing for Evelyn Vanderheyden, Don Tobias, Peggy Taylor, Elie Hunt, Vi Shufelt, Sheila Lawrence, Peggy Wagner, Ed Lehmann, Austin Moulds, Mac & Marilyn MacCaughey, Ellen Easley, Sandra Hopkins, Kay Mahl, Mary Johnson, Leah Fisher, Barb Stevenson.

As they deal with physical, emotional and/or spiritual issues, please pray for David—brother and Lynn—sister-in-law of Ed Lehmann; Chad—son of Sheila Lawrence; Mark—son of Sharon Campbell; Mary Ann—mother of Cheryl Nitz; Jack Flynn and Mary—sister of Gretchen Hermann; the paternal grandfather of Autumn Eifert; Amy—daughter of Jim & Bonnie Eastman and sister of Jenny Eastman; Elena & Ezequiel Romero—parents of Deb Utley; Masako—mother of Fumi Nakayama; Nancy—mother of Gloria Zember; John—husband of Sandy Hawley; John—son of Mac & Marilyn MacCaughey; Chuck—husband of Sue Pehlivanian; Laurel—niece of Curt & Victoria Vollman; Ramona, Steve, Susan, Sandra, John, Liz and Gabby—friends & family of the Galles; Meyer Schaal; Scott Mohn—friends of the Paffrath family.

Prayers for those in the service — Evan Humphreys, Col. Jay Brooke, Jared Smith, Jordan Smith, Nicholas Hansen.

*Thank you for your continued prayers for everyone. They are powerful!*





### About the logo & branding

A Sanctified Art, LLC—"As we developed the logo and branding for this theme, we wanted the visuals to feel earthy, like roots firmly planted in rich soil. We started with tree imagery, photographing tree roots and bark textures. We imagined the ways Jesus' teachings can ground and root us in the good news, but also push us to grow and expand like branches reaching to the sky. As we discussed the scriptures in the series more and more, we realized that at the core of Jesus' teachings are not esoteric ideas, but people. Time and again, Jesus refocuses our attention on people—often those who are harmed, judged, oppressed, or hungry. And so, in the tree icon, the branches are also abstract people with arms outstretched. Their interwoven connection produces good fruit. The roots of the tree icon frame the typography above and below, which is meant to resemble a book or the Bible. In the typography, the word "good" is emphasized with circular letter shapes; the two "O's" form the symbol for infinity. When we are grounded in the good news, the goodness of God can infinitely flourish and grow."

## Ash Wednesday the good news is...

**all are invited** | Luke 14:15-24 (*Parable of the wedding banquet*)

We begin Ash Wednesday with an open invitation. Instead of inviting people to focus internally on fasting and self-deprivation during Lent, this parable invites us into a communal feast. The host of the party sends a servant to search the entire city to bring people in: "Go to the highways and back alleys and urge people to come in so that my house will be filled." (CEB) Though the net is cast wide, too many guests deny the invitation, instead focusing on their individual concerns. Yet, the host's invitation is persistent. They search high and low for the dispossessed and the vulnerable, perhaps those who are hungry to accept the invitation. As guests are gathered in, the miracle is that there is still room. There is more love and abundance available, if only we are present to accept it.

**Weekly good news mantra ...**  
**God will never stop inviting me.**



**WEDNESDAY**

Question:

*How does it feel to be personally invited to an event or a gathering?*

Prayer:

*Invitational God, invitation and exclusion are two sides of the same coin. It's hard to think about one without thinking about the other. However, I know that you are a God who will never skip over me or leave me out. You are a God with open doors, personal invitations, room at the table, and a place with my name on it. Thank you for always inviting me. Amen.*

**THURSDAY**

Question:

*When was the last time you extended an invitation?  
Could you extend an invitation to someone this week?*

Prayer:

*Inviting Christ, you were so good at inviting people to join you. Whether you told them to drop their nets and follow you, or to simply join you for dinner, you extended invitations again and again. Give me that same courage. Give me that same vulnerability and awareness. Reveal to me where I can practice invitation in my own life, for if anything, I want to be more like you. In hope I pray, amen.*

**FRIDAY**

Question:

*What is God inviting you to experience, focus on, or let go of this Lenten season?*

Prayer:

*Inviting God, the season of Lent whispers an invitation in my ear to go deeper in faith and to draw closer to you. I want to heed the Spirit's whisper, so today I pray—what would you have me focus on in this season? What work is mine to do? Where is my heart being tugged? Reveal your hope for me so that I might heed your call faithfully. Amen.*

## SATURDAY

Question:

*Do you believe invitation is a spiritual practice?*

Prayer:

*Holy God, when I think of spiritual practices I often think of praying and fasting, reading scripture and offering generosity. I often think of quiet Sunday mornings and faithful disciplines. But could a dinner party invitation be a spiritual practice? Could the invitation to take a walk, to share a meal, or to laugh loudly over coffee be holy? Could a habit of invitation draw me closer to you? Help me to find the holy in the ordinary. Amen.*





There is Still Room | Lauren Wright Pittman  
*Digital drawing with collage*