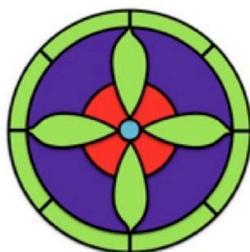




Ash
WEDNESDAY



ST. JOHN'S
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

Richmond † Texas

ORDER OF WORSHIP
A SERVICE OF ASHES
FEBRUARY 18, 2026
6:30PM

CALL TO WORSHIP *(based on Joel 2:12-16a)*

Leader: Return to the Lord with all of your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning. Take a good look at what is going on in your heart.

People: **We will return to God because our God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, loves us without wavering and relents from punishing.**

Leader: We, too, can relent - from the things that keep us from God. We can make ourselves a living offering to God, a blessing to others.

People: **Let us call everyone together, people of all ages and stages of life, to return to the Lord and be present to all God has done for us.**

HYMN

"Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days" #269

Lord, who throughout these forty days
For us didst fast and pray,
Teach us with Thee to mourn our sins
And close by Thee to stay.

As Thou with Satan didst contend,
And didst the victory win,
O give us strength in Thee to fight,
In Thee to conquer sin.

As Thou didst hunger bear, and thirst,
So teach us, gracious Lord,
To die to self, and chiefly live
By Thy most holy word.

And through these days of penitence,
And through Thy passiontide,
Yea, evermore in life and death,
Jesus, with us abide.

Abide with us, that so, this life
Of suffering overpast,
An Easter of unending joy
We may attain at last.

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SCRIPTURE *Psalms 51:1-17*

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

⁴Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. ⁵Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. ⁶You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. ⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. ⁹Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. ¹³Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. ¹⁴Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

¹⁵O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. ¹⁷The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

ANTHEM

"Give Me Jesus"

Chancel Choir

SCRIPTURE *Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21*

¹“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“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. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“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. ⁶But 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.

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so 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.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

HOMILY

Rev. Richard Luna

INVITATION TO A LENTEN DISCIPLINE

Dear brothers and sisters 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 that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church. In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s Holy Word. To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now bow before our Creator and Redeemer.

PRAYER OVER THE ASHES Rev. Richard Luna

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

(At this time, you are invited to come forward and receive the sign of the cross upon your forehead.)

CLOSING HYMN

"Take My Life and Let It Be"

#399

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated Lord to Thee
Take my moments and my days
Let them flow in ceaseless praise
Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee

Take my voice and let me sing
Always only for my King
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee
Take my silver and my gold
Not a mite would I withhold
Take my intellect and use
Ev'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose

Take my will and make it Thine
It shall be no longer mine
Take my heart it is Thine own
It shall be Thy royal throne
Take my love my Lord I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store
Take myself and I will be
Ever only all for Thee

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GOING FORTH

As you go forth in the world today, may these ashes remind you that we all are marked with the need for God. Though the outward symbol may fade, Christ makes his eternal mark upon our hearts.