



ASH WEDNESDAY

A Service of Repentance & Renewal

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”
— Psalm 51:10

Entering the Holy Season of Lent



February 18, 2026

*Little Swatara Church of the Brethren
Transformed by Christ to Love and
Serve Together*

Ash Wednesday
February 18, 2026

Call to Worship

Scripture: Joel 2:12–13

“Even now,” declares the Lord,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.
Rend your heart and not your garments...”

Opening Prayer (Unison)

Holy and merciful God,
You formed us from the dust of the earth
and breathed into us the breath of life.
As we begin this Lenten journey,
search our hearts, reveal our sin,
and lead us again to the cross of Christ.
Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Scripture: Psalm 51:1–4, 10–12

“Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me...”

Gospel Reading

Scripture: Matthew 6:1, 16–21

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do...
But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face...”

Consider these points to further our focus.

- Ashes remind us of our mortality (*Genesis 3:19*)
- Repentance is not performance, but surrender
- Lent is not about self-improvement, but heart transformation
- The cross turns ashes into hope

Invitation to Confession

Scripture: 1 John 1:8–9

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us”

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Merciful God,
We confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
Forgive us, Lord.
Restore us, and lead us in the way everlasting.
Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

Scripture:

- *Genesis 3:19* - “For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”
- *Mark 1:15* — “Repent and believe the gospel.”

Assurance of Pardon

Scripture: Romans 8:1

“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Unison Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
As we leave marked by ashes,
send us out marked by your grace.
Walk with us through this season,
that our hearts may be shaped
more fully into your likeness.
Amen.

Benediction

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:20–21

“Be reconciled to God...”

**As we prepare for the viewing of the “Passion of Christ”, remember
the Open Hand.**

