



ASH WEDNESDAY

5:30 P.M. | FEB. 18, 2026

ST. ANDREW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IOWA CITY

Ash Wednesday

the good news is... all are invited

Read Luke 14:15-24

Artist Statement | Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

This image is meant to be viewed from the center, moving outward. The host sets a table,¹ with arms stretched wide in welcome. Surrounding this initial invitation, the first invitees form a ring of rejection around the host—arms crossed, closed off, and distracted by their material wealth and status. One surveys their vast vineyard, another counts their livestock, and the third navigates the economics of joining two households.

Trees, rooted in the central scene of the guestless table,² break through the ring of rejection. The next layer includes four figures—with the host's same open-armed posture—extending welcome to people in neighborhoods, markets, and communal spaces. In the parable, the initial invitation is cast more broadly; everyone is welcome despite any status or condition that might typically isolate them from community. The invited reject, but the rejected are embraced. In the art, the welcoming branches of the tree bear good fruit.³ The invitation continues to grow and flourish despite all the worldly barriers that would keep us apart and isolated. In the final ring, a crowd is gathered around an even larger table, one that still has open seats.⁴

It can be easy to focus on what feels negative in this text, but in order for the invitation to truly *be* an invitation, it cannot be coercive. There must always be the option to decline the invitation, and even that is good news. Still, the deeper good news is this: the host never stops inviting, and when all is said and done, there is still room at the table.

Look

Look closely at all the people in the outermost ring of the image. What do you notice about the empty seats?

- 1 The center of the table holds Communion elements, which serve as a nod to the storyteller of the parable and an allusion to Christ's ever-expanding welcome.
- 2 I placed a photograph of soil as the ground upon which the central table sits. This crumbly dirt texture represents how this open invitation is fertile ground for the good news to take root.
- 3 The tree is also a visual reference to the *Tell Me Something Good* logo, which includes abstract people forming the branches of a tree.
- 4 The final green ring holds the texture of the leaves of a healthy, thriving tree.



Finish the Race
Owe Nothing But Love



STEWARDSHIP 2026



New Guest Connection

Ash Wednesday

5:30 a.m. | February 18, 2026

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church | Iowa City, Iowa

Welcome + Announcements

Prelude

Call to Gather | *adapted from a liturgy by Sarah Speed*

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.

✠ **Gathering Hymn** | "Just As I Am," pg. 6 (*hymnal*, #627)

✠ **Prayer of Confession and Promise of Ever-Present Grace** | *adapted from a liturgy by Sarah Speed*

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,

Hymns + Songs | Pages are listed for the printed bulletin

Numbers (#) are listed for music in the *Lift Up Your Hearts* (red) hymnal

Bold Print | Speak or sing together in unison.

✠ | Please rise in body or in spirit.

God will never stop reaching for us.
So with that good news in mind, let us go to God in prayer.

**Loving God, you invite us
deeper into faith,
deeper into relationship,
and deeper into community.**

**You invite us to your table,
but we cling to the wall.**

We RSVP “Maybe.”

We come up with excuses for why we can’t attend.

**Forgive us for doubting the invitation,
and forgive us for doubting our worth.**

**Show us how to respond to you with confidence instead of hesitancy,
and joy instead of doubt.**

With gratitude we pray.

Time for Silent Confession

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.

Gospel Reading | Matthew 6:1-6 (The Voice)

Jesus: But when you do these righteous acts, *do not do them in front of spectators*. Don’t do them where you can be seen, *let alone lauded*, by others. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. When you give to the poor, *do not boast about it*, announcing your donations with blaring

✠ After the Time for Young Disciples, children in Kindergarten and younger are invited to head to the Lower Level Children’s Area for children’s programming.

trumpets as the play actors do. Do not brazenly give your charity in the synagogues and on the streets; *indeed, do not give at all* if you are giving because you want to be praised by your neighbors. Those people who give in order to reap praise have already received their reward. When you give to the needy, do it in secret—even your left hand should not know what your right hand is doing. Then your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

Likewise, when you pray, do not be as hypocrites who love to pray loudly at synagogue or on street corners—their concern is to be seen by men. They have already earned their reward. When you pray, go into a private room, close the door, and pray unseen to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not go on and on, excessively and strangely like the outsiders; they think their verbosity will let them be heard *by their deities*. Do not be like them. *Your prayers need not be labored or lengthy or grandiose*—for your Father knows what you need before you ever ask Him.

The word of the prophets for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

The Message | Pastor Carl Anderson

Prayers of the People | *Lord's Prayer* | adapted from Luke 11:2-4 & Matthew 6:13 (*The Voice*)

Father in heaven, may your name be revered.

May your kingdom come.

May your will be accomplished on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us the food we need for tomorrow.

Forgive us for our wrongs, as we forgive those who wrong us.

Lead us away from temptation, and save us from the evil one.

But let Your kingdom be ... and let it be powerful and glorious forever. Amen.

✕ **Sending Hymn** | “O Master Let Me Walk with Thee,” pg. 7 (*hymnal*, #325)

✕ **Benediction & Imposition of Ashes**

Postlude

Just as I Am, Without One Plea

E^b B^b E^b B^b B^{b7}

1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was
 2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y_a con - flict,
 3 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt wel - come, par - don,
 4 Just as I am, thy love un-known has bro - ken ev - ery

A^b/E^b E^b A^b

shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
 man - y_a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,
 cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise I be - lieve,
 bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,

E^b B^b E^b

O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee

D G/D E A

1 O Mas - ter, let me walk with thee in low - ly
2 Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear,
3 Teach me thy pa - tience; still with thee in clos - er,
4 In hope that sends a shin - ing ray far down the

D E7 A A7 D/F#

paths of ser - vice free; tell me thy se - cret;
win - ning word of love; teach me the way - ward
dear - er com - pa - ny, in work that keeps faith
fu - ture's broad - ening way, in peace that on - ly

G Em A Em A7 D

help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.
feet to stay, and guide them in the home - ward way.
sweet and strong, in trust that tri - umphs o - ver wrong.
thou canst give, with thee, O Mas - ter, let me live.

Words: Washington Gladden (1836-1918), P.D.
Music (MARYTON 8.8.8.8): H. Percy Smith (1825-1898), P.D.

Questions about Worship?

- **Welcome!** Whether you are joining us in person or online, we are *delighted* to worship together.
- St. Andrew is an open, affirming, and inclusive congregation. That means we welcome saints and sinners, skeptics and believers, families of *all* shapes and sizes, and people from every point along life's journey. So, whoever you are this morning, whatever you believe—whether you believe anything at all: *You are welcome here!*
- If you are here for the first time, we encourage to stop by our Welcome Table or Information Kiosk near the main entrance in the Atrium. There you will find some good people who would love to answer any questions you might have about our faith community.
- If you can't stop at the Info Kiosk today, you can learn more about St. Andrew by emailing office@saintandrew-ic.org or filling out this short form: <https://tinyurl.com/sapc-guest>.
- Our worship services begin **in-person and online shortly before 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings**, followed by Sunday School and Adult Christian Education offerings from September to April and a variety of After Worship activities from May to August.
- **Nursery care** (up to age 2) is provided in the Lower Level throughout the morning. Programming for children (through Kindergarten age) begins in the Lower Level after the **Time for Young Disciples**.
- Unless otherwise designated, gifts given to the **weekly offering** support the church budget, including staff salaries, utilities, mission outreach, and all aspects of ministry.
- To log into the **St. Andrew Connect** system, either download the **St. Andrew App** through the **App Store/Google Play** or visit <https://saintandrew.ccbchurch.com>.
- There are wheelchairs available for use as needed in the lower level entrance foyer and by the coat racks near the upper level entrance.
- There is an AED near the Coffee Kitchen should a medical emergency arise.
- Permission to livestream the music in this service is from CCLI (#617801) and One License (A-711114).

ST. ANDREW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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www.saintandrew.ccbchurch.com | bit.ly/SAPCYouTube