



ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday begins the Christian season of Lent. We will spend the coming weeks journeying with Jesus toward the cross; toward the death that ultimately brings resurrected life. Many of us will spend our days practicing a new spiritual discipline or giving up something that seems to be getting in the way of the life we long to live.

Tonight we come together to mark the beginning of this Lenten journey. As part of tonight's worship, the imposition of ashes will be offered. Ashes have been used in Christian churches to mark the beginning of Lent since at least the 10th Century, and ashes are mentioned in scripture as a symbol of purification and repentance.



Valley Community

PRELUDE

Appalachia Waltz
Mark O'Connor

Rachel Williams, cello
Martha McDermott, violin

LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

GATHERING MUSIC

O'Carolán's Draught
Turlough O'Carolán

CALL TO LENT

OPENING PRAYER*

Sheila Sheldon, CRE

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. We give you thanks for your generous invitation, and we pray that you would forgive us for the ways we have failed to respond. Move in our hearts to hear your call, that we may be filled with joy as we feast at your table.

You invite all of us, regardless of who we are or where we've been. Forgive us for the ways that we have failed to extend your invitation to others. We draw lines, assume the worst, accept exclusion, and divide. Forgive our harmful ways. This Lent, show us how to love others the way that you love us. With hope we pray, amen.

*Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

† Hymn #435

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven.
There is no place where earth's failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind.
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's Word,
and our lives reflect thanksgiving for the goodness of our Lord.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 14:12-24 (CEB)

MEDITATION

All Are Invited

Rev. Kyle Sandison

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Beau Soir
Claude Debussy

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

SHARING OF THE BREAD & CUP AND MARKING WITH ASHES

† Hymn #769

For Everyone Born

For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead,

Refrain:

and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's fair, **(Refrain)**

For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong, **(Refrain)**

For just and unjust, a place at the table,
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
in anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,
for just and unjust, a new way to live, **(Refrain)**

For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free, **(Refrain)**

PRAYER FOR OUR LENTEN JOURNEY

Loving God, we thank you for inviting us to your table and for our communion together in this place. Having been marked with ashes, we humbly take our seats at your banquet, as joyful recipients of your grace. As we go from this table, may we be generous in sharing your love with others, offering the same persistent invitation that you have extended to us.

As we journey through this season of Lent, help us to hear your good news afresh. Teach us to follow Jesus more closely, that we may embody his love and grace in our daily lives. May we never forget that we are a people who have been invited in, and in remembering, may we become a community that welcomes others with warmth and love.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Four Romantic Pieces: I. Allegro Moderato
Antonin Dvorak

Wednesdays in Lent

6:00 pm | Dinner in Cornerstone Room

Wednesdays in Lent this year will be a time to come together in fellowship, get to know Pastor Kyle, and reflect on our faith both individually and as a community. Dinner will be hosted by Church Committees beginning at 6:00 PM. After dinner, we'll move into a more worshipful moment together. There will be music, scripture, prayers, and time to share and have conversation together. As we sink into Jesus' teachings throughout the season, we may not always be comfortable, but we can trust that these teachings are good, rooted in love, and worthy of celebration.

Children are invited to come and explore the Lenten theme of the week with Jameese in the Sunshine room following dinner.

Meals will be provided by committee, and attendees are encouraged to bring **desserts if your last name is A-L**, and **a side dish if your last name is M-Z**. Make Lenten services part of your journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter, and may learning from others illumine new avenues of your own personal faith.

SPECIAL OFFERING: THE FATHER PROJECT Fostering Actions To Help Earnings and Responsibility

Founded in 1999, their mission is to assist fathers in overcoming barriers that prevent them from supporting their children economically and emotionally. Andy Freeberg (Valley member) is the Executive Director. Valley continues to raise funds to support Father/Child activities and various services for dads.