

First Presbyterian Church

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February 18, 2026

We welcome you not as strangers but as a part of God's family! We are a community of faith that gathers to praise our Lord and Savior, serve others, search for answers, and enjoy the fellowship of one another. We hope today you will be challenged and discover encouragement. The peace of Christ be with you!

Gathering Around God's Word

Prelude

Healey Willian

“In the Shadow of the Cross”

Introit

Richard Hillert

“Create in us a Clean Heart, O God”

Welcome and Call to Worship (Responsive)

Leader: Turn away from the calls of worldly success.

People: Repent and turn back to God.

Leader: Turn away from the desire to have what everyone else has.

People: Repent, and turn back to God.

Leader: Turn away from greed and power.

People: Repent, and turn back to God.

Leader: We seek forgiveness. We seek healing. We seek wholeness.

Unison: May our hearts be renewed in this time of worship.

Prayer

*Hymn # 167

“Forty Days and Forty Nights”

Proclaiming God’s Word

New Testament Lesson

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21, Page 5

Anthem

Mary Louise Bringle

“Sign Us with Ashes”

Old Testament Lesson

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17, Page 845

Meditation

The Rev. Maggie Beamguard

“Sanctify a Fast”

Responding to God’s Word

*Psalm of Penitence (Responsive)

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgment.

Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother’s womb.

For behold, you look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.

Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

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

Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me.

Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

I shall teach your ways to the wicked, and sinners shall return to you.

Deliver me from death, O God, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, but you take no delight in burnt offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, you will not despise.

Imposition of Ashes and Silent Prayer

(You are invited to come forward for ashes to be placed
on your forehead or hand.)

*Hymn # 722

“Lord, Speak to Me that I May Speak”

*Charge and Blessing

*Choral Response (Traditional) “Return to the Lord Your God”

*Postlude (Patricia Lou Harris) “What Wondrous Love is This”

*Please stand if able.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season in the church year known as Lent. Lent is a time to prepare for the celebration of Easter and to renew our life in the mystery of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes, a biblical symbol of mourning and penitence. This ancient sign speaks of the fragility of human life, and marks the penitence of the community of faith. You are invited, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of love, and by reading and meditating on the Word of God.

Community Lenten Series



Each Wednesday during Lent you are invited to our Community Lenten Series at noon. Churches may request a fee or donation for the cost of the meal.

The following churches will host:

- 2/25 First Presbyterian Church, 110 S. Ray St.
- 3/4 John Hall Presbyterian Church, 520 Dowd Street
- 3/11 Grace Church, 108 S. McNeill St.
- 3/18 Carthage United Methodist, 401 McReynolds St.
- 3/26 Mt Olive AME Zion Church, 440 Bethlehem Church Rd.