

WELCOME TO THE ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE AT EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, the 40-day period of fasting and penitence before Easter. On Ash Wednesday, we receive the sign of the cross on our foreheads reminding us of our mortality and humanity as we begin the Lenten Fast. The ashes are a Biblical symbol of repentance, sorrow, and humility. There are many cases in the Scriptures of wearing ashes as a sign of penitence, often while wearing sackcloth.

As we receive the ashes this evening, remember that “from dust we were created and to dust we shall return.” (Genesis 3:19). As we have been baptized in Jesus Christ, we participate in both his death and his resurrection. While we acknowledge in humility our mortality and our need for God’s forgiveness and grace in our lives, we hold fast to the truth that death does not have the last word as Jesus journeys to Jerusalem.

Unison Reading: Joel 2:12-17

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment.

¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord your God?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶ gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar, let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, “Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’ ”

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MINISTERS—ALL OF US!

STAFF

Dr. Bradley D. Smith, Pastor

Dr. Douglass D. Key, Senior Associate Pastor

Rev. W. Croskeys Royall, Associate Pastor

Fredna Lee, Director of Music Ministry

Louis Shirer, Organist

Emily Higgins, Director of Middle School Youth

Katie Herndon, Day School Director

Emmet Hough, Director of Christian Life Center

James Cassidy, A/V Director

Rev. Emily M. Mooneyhan, Associate Pastor

Rev. Rob Schoonover, Associate Pastor

Dr. Carol J. Byrd, Parish Associate

Alisha Hudson, Ex. Dir. Finance and Admin.

Dr. Augie Gil, Director of Worship and Arts

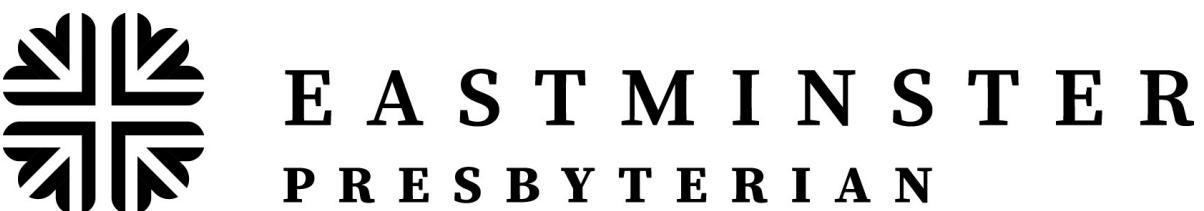
Blythe Lewis, Senior Communications Officer

Christy Rippy, Treasurer

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Alex Rogers, Plant Operations Director

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026



3200 TRENHOLM ROAD

COLUMBIA, SC 29204

803-256-1654

www.eastminsterpres.org

PLEASE ENTER THE SANCTUARY SILENTLY

In Christ's name we welcome you to our Ash Wednesday service. Ash Wednesday allows us the opportunity to meditate on our mortality, sinfulness and need of a Savior, to renew our commitment to daily repentance, and to remember with confidence and gratitude that Christ has conquered death and sin. Therefore, you are asked to enter the Sanctuary in silence to prepare your heart and mind for worship. Please take this time to silence the world and focus your heart and mind on worshiping our living God.

*"God is in His Holy temple,
let all the earth keep silence before Him."*

PRELUDE

Chorale Prelude on "Eventide"

Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Rob Schoonover

Leader: Have Mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love
People: **Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**
Leader: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.
People: **The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**
All: Let us worship God!

*HYMN OF PRAISE #757

Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples of the Lord

KINGSFOLD

*PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Bradley D. Smith

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

ANTHEM

These Forty Days

Zollene Reissner

Lord, have mercy upon us. Lord, who throughout these forty days for us did fast and pray, Teach us with you to mourn our sins, and close by you to stay. Kyrie eleison. We may not know, we cannot tell what pain you had to bear. But in this holy season, Lord, we would your sorrow share. Kyrie eleison. Lord, grant that in our penitence, we may also bring our praise, And through your sacrifice of Love, receive your gift of grace. Abide with us that when this life of suff'ring shall be past, An Easter of unending joy we may celebrate at last! And Lord have mercy upon us, and grant us peace.

Claudia F. Hernaman (1838-1898)

SCRIPTURE READING

Unison Reading: Joel 2:12-17

Scripture Focus: Matthew 6:1-6

Pastor: The Word of the Lord!

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

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MEDITATION

"Forty Days of Grace"

Rev. Schoonover

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

O Judge and Redeemer, we come before you, shorn of all pretenses and without cause for pride. We care more about bread than our confession of Christ our Savior. We worship many gods and do not serve you alone. We try to curry favor instead of trusting in your grace. Forgive our deceit and grant us forgiveness. Through Christ we repent of our sinful ways.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

All: In Christ we are forgiven, thanks be to God!

CHORAL MEDITATION

Come Find His Rest

Dewar/arr. Forrest

Come weary one, leave thy labors; come, lift thy head see thy Savior and Friend. His arms are opened wide; O soul, be satisfied. Come find his rest. Take his yoke upon thee, for he is gentle and lowly in heart. So learn from Christ the Lord, thy Portion and Reward. Come find his rest. I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest; lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast." I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn and sad; I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

Dewar (2021) & Bonar (1856)

Ella Canney, solo

INTRODUCTION AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Rev. Emily Mooneyhan

The congregation comes forward to receive the sign of the cross with ashes. From ashes we have come — to ashes we shall return.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE HYMN #433

Sign Us With Ashes

PHOENIX

Refrain: Sign us with ashes, merciful God, children of dust, as to dust we return. Sign us with ashes, merciful God. Mark s and make us your own.

Congregation, please join the choir in singing the refrain

PRAYER (*Unison*)

Dear God, who calls us to journey through the wilderness, we step forward with courage, called to walk the way of Christ. As we experience our internal and individual repentance, may we also repent of the brokenness that we have caused, the neighbors we have turned away from. Give us compassion for the mourning and disaster that others experience, and show us how to be healers even as we ourselves are healed. And after our forty days of reflection, repentance, and mourning, when we come at dawn to the Easter garden, may we know the true joy of Resurrection morning. Amen.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION

Cross of Ashes

Traditional English melody

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Please depart in silence