

# Ash Wednesday

## February 18, 2026



*On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.*



**ZION**  
Ministries Under the Cross

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# Welcome to Zion!

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***“Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love...”***

(Joel 2:13)

Welcome – whether this is your home congregation or your first visit, we’re glad you’re here!

We welcome all people in the name of Christ to experience God’s goodness and grace in Word, water, and meal. Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, there is a place for you to belong at Zion.

## Get Connected at Zion

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The best ways to stay connected are to visit our website, follow us on social media (@zionchurchdfb on Facebook and Instagram), and subscribe to our weekly newsletter.

## Children in Worship

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Children are God’s gift to our church! They are not the future of our church; they are the right now. The way we welcome children here directly affects the way they respond to the Church, to God, and to one another.

We welcome children and their families to sit near the Playground at the front of the sanctuary. There are coloring activities, puzzles, books, and a toolbox to engage in our worship together.

## Giving

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We appreciate your stewardship of treasure, talent, and time at Zion. You may leave your offerings in the offering plates or give online via our website or this QR code.



## Livestreaming

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Zion livestreams all our services on Facebook and YouTube. Any person present gives consent to being filmed or photographed.



Zion is a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) community, and extends God's radical welcome to all people, because we're all created in God's image.

# We Gather

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## SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray together... **Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## We Hear & Respond to God's Word

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### FIRST READING

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

...The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

### SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

...The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Cantor**                      **Assembly**

Come let us re - turn to the Lord,      come, let us re - turn to the Lord;

**All**

Come, let us re - turn to the Lord,      let us re-turn to the Lord.

### GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

*Before the reading:* The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*After the reading:* The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ!**

### SERMON

“Our Father, We Have Wandered”

## INVITATION TO LENT

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus’ Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God’s mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

## CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most holy and merciful God, **we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, 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, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven. We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.



Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives; our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people; our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you. **(Refrain)**

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty; our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us; our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you. **(Refrain)**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us. **Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

## IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

*People may come forward to receive ashes. During this time, the Cantor will sing a setting of Psalm 51, and we will observe silence for the remainder of the time.*

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,  
**that we may show forth your glory in the world.**  
By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,  
**bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

## SHARING OF PEACE & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The peace of the Lord be with you always! **And also with you.**

**“The Glory of These Forty Days”**

Let us pray together...**O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

**We Feast at the Lord’s Table**

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**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, Lord God of heav-en-ly hosts.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, Lord God of heav-en-ly hosts.

Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho-san - na! Ho-san - na! Ho-san-na in the high -

est. Ho-san - na! Ho-san - na!

Bless-ed is he who comes! Bless-ed is he who comes!

Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

# LORD’S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

Our Fa - ther in hea - ven, hal-low-ed be your  
name, hal-low-ed be your name. Your king-dom come, your  
will be done, on earth as it is in hea-ven, on earth as it is in hea-ven.  
Give us to-day our dai - ly bread and for - give us all our  
sins as we for-give those who sin a - gainst us, as we for-give those who sin a -  
gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al and de - li - ver us from  
e - vil, de - liv - er us from - e - vil. For yours is the  
king-dom, the pow - er and the glo - ry, for - e - ver and e - ver, for  
e - ver and e - ver. A - men, a - men. A - men.

# SHARING THE MEAL

*During the season of Lent, our meal is shared in silence.  
You are encouraged to use this time for prayer and contemplation.*



# We Are Sent into the World

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## BLESSING FOR STRENGTH

May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ comfort, strengthen, and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together...**Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## BLESSING

Beloved in the Lord, God has shown you what is good. What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN

Hymn #325

“I Want Jesus to Walk with Me”

## DISMISSAL

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Thanks be to God.**

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### Prayer of the Day

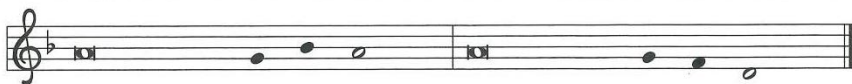
## First Reading

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

*or Isaiah 58:1-12* [not printed]

## Psalm

**Psalm 51:1-17; tone 9**



continued

*Psalms, continued*

<sup>4</sup>Against you only have I sinned  
and done what is evil <sup>1</sup> in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak  
and right <sup>1</sup> in your judgment.

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born  
<sup>1</sup> steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my <sup>1</sup> mother's womb.

<sup>6</sup>Indeed, you delight in truth  
<sup>1</sup> deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom  
<sup>1</sup> deep within.

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop,  
and I <sup>1</sup> shall be clean;  
wash me,  
and I shall be pur- <sup>1</sup> er than snow.

<sup>8</sup>Let me hear <sup>1</sup> joy and gladness,  
that the body you have broken  
<sup>1</sup> may rejoice.

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face <sup>1</sup> from my sins,  
and blot out <sup>1</sup> all my wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean <sup>1</sup> heart, O God,  
and renew a right spir- <sup>1</sup> it within me.

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away <sup>1</sup> from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spir- <sup>1</sup> it from me.

<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of <sup>1</sup> your salvation  
and sustain me  
with your boun- <sup>1</sup> tiful Spirit.

<sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways <sup>1</sup> to offenders,  
and sinners shall be re- <sup>1</sup> stored to you.

<sup>14</sup>Rescue me from bloodshed,  
O God of <sup>1</sup> my salvation,  
and my tongue shall sing  
<sup>1</sup> of your righteousness.

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, o- <sup>1</sup> pen my lips,  
and my mouth  
shall pro- <sup>1</sup> claim your praise.

<sup>16</sup>For you take no delight in sacrifice,  
or <sup>1</sup> I would give it.  
You are not pleased  
<sup>1</sup> with burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God  
is a <sup>1</sup> troubled spirit;  
a troubled and broken heart, O God,  
you will <sup>1</sup> not despise.

## Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10 [not printed]

## Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever you pray, go into your room and

shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>16</sup>"And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup>"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

TODAY'S READINGS February 18, 2026

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Next Sunday's Readings: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11.

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