

AN ORDER OF CELEBRATION FOR THE GATHERED COMMUNITY

Woodridge United Methodist Church

Wednesday, February 18th, 2026

Ash Wednesday

Music to Prepare Us for Worship

Scripture Reading

Joel 2:12-13 (CEB)

Call to Worship

Pastor Dave: Lord, you formed us from the dust of the earth and breathed your Spirit into us, that we might become living beings. But we confess that we have forgotten your grace, living as if we sustained ourselves by our own breath.

Many Voices: Now we come before you with broken hearts and return to you with our whole hearts. We hold the pieces of our lives, and in our weariness and sorrow, we seek your face once more.

Hymn

"Open My Eyes That I May See"

UMH #454

Invocation

Charlotte: Gracious God, on this Ash Wednesday, we come before you with humble hearts. We come relying only on the cross of Jesus. Instead of tearing the clothing that covers our bodies, we tear our hearts and humbly bow before you, wearing ashes instead of crowns. Have mercy on us and pour your grace upon us. Please accept our worship and grant us the grace of forgiveness and the joy of salvation. We pray in Jesus' name.

Many Voices: Amen.

Scripture Readings

First Reading

Psalm 52 (CEB)

Second Reading

Jeremiah 20:7-13 (CEB)

Charlotte: The Word of God for the people of God.

Many Voices: Thanks be to God.

Special Music

"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"

UMH #349

Pastor Dave

Lenten Reflection

Pastor Dave

Confessions of Sins & Confession Offerings

Charlotte: We have not loved you with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven. Lord have mercy.

Many Voices: Lord have mercy.

Charlotte: We have been deaf to your call to serve. We have been unfaithful, proud, and hypocritical. Christ have mercy.

Many Voices: Christ have mercy.

Charlotte: We have been self-centered and have taken advantage of others. Lord have mercy.

Many Voices: Lord have mercy.

Charlotte: We have been envious of those more fortunate than ourselves. Christ have

mercy.

Many Voices: Christ have mercy.

Charlotte: We have loved worldly goods and comforts too much. We have been dishonest in daily life and work. Lord have mercy.

Many Voices: Lord have mercy.

Charlotte: We have neglected prayer and worship and have failed to commend the faith that is in us. Christ have mercy.

Many Voices: Christ have mercy.

Charlotte: We have been blind to human need and suffering, and indifferent to injustice and cruelty. Lord have mercy.

Many Voices: Lord have mercy.

Charlotte: We have thought uncharitably about others, and we have been prejudiced towards those who differ from us. Christ have mercy.

Many Voices: Christ have mercy.

Charlotte: We have wasted and polluted your creation and lacked concern for those who come after us. Lord have mercy.

Many Voices: Lord have mercy.

Charlotte: Merciful God, we have sinned in what we have thought and said, in the wrong we have done, and in the good we have not done. We have sinned in ignorance: we have sinned in weakness: we have sinned through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry. We repent and turn to you. Forgive us, for our Savior Christ's sake, and renew our lives and hearts to the glory of your name.

Many Voices: Amen.

[Silent Prayer]

[Unspoken prayers, unhealed wounds, long-held guilt, or quiet resolutions—write them down on the scrap paper you received. Please do not write your name on it.]

Thanksgiving Over the Ashes

Pastor Dave: God, who created us from the dust, may these ashes remind us that we are mortal and fill us with humble hearts. Help us remember that eternal life is given only by your grace. We pray in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Many Voices: Amen.

Pastor Dave: We are formed from the dust and to dust we shall return. These ashes are a sign of our mortality and repentance. Yet they are also a sign of our hope— a longing for new life rooted in faith.

[Please come forward in faith to receive this sign. Afterward, place your paper on the cross using a nail. These offerings will be burned after the service.]

Imposition of Ashes

Pastor Dave: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. *(Genesis 3:19)*

Congregation: Amen.

Prayer

Many Voices: Merciful God, you called us forth from the dust of the earth; you claimed us for Christ in the waters of baptism. Look upon us as we enter these Forty Days bearing the mark of ashes and bless the journey through the desert

of Lent to the font of rebirth. As we remember our mortality and seek repentance today, we know you to be a God who is rich in forgiveness and abounding in steadfast love, love that culminates in eternal life with you. Guide our steps this Lent, so that we might find greater fulfillment in your promises and better serve others with a heart that's reflective of you. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

***Hymn of Dedication**

"Near to the Heart of God"

UMH #472

***Sending Forth**

Pastor Dave: The ashes on our foreheads today are not the mark of our shame, but the seal of grace. To remember that we are dust is not to deny our worth, but to remember that even dust was shaped by the hands of God and filled with divine breath. Let us walk this Lenten journey now— in silence, in waiting, ready to hear the whisper of God.

Many Voices: Amen.

Leave in Silence or Remain for Quiet Prayer.