



WILLIAMSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ASH WEDNESDAY

A SERVICE OF ASHES, REPENTANCE & COMMITMENT

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

Our Lenten Journey Together

PRAYER OF THE EVENING

God of our salvation, we long to be reconciled to you. Help us to clear away any obstacle that prevents us from accepting the grace of Christ, so that, by the power of God at work in us, we may live even as we are dying and rejoice even in our sorrows, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE GATHERING

PRELUDE

O Lamb of God Most Holy

J. S. Bach

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

Leader: We come to worship God as the Lenten season begins,
aware of our frailty and our failings.

All: **We come seeking God's mercy,
acknowledging our mortality.**

Leader: Having received the waters of baptism, we are marked now with ashes.

All: **The treasures of this earth do not last;
our treasure is in heaven, our heart's true home.**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

God of Ashes, today, let us hold the tension of the story of our making – born of the dirt, beautifully connected to the earth we walk on. And yet, possessing the knowledge of our own mortality – that our common decay cannot be escaped. As we begin Lent, help us to become honest about the ways our societies and selfhoods are marred by injustice, cruelty, neglect, and greed. Help us to see our own role in the degeneration of the world; that as we push back evil around us, we might also admit those secret evils that dwell in us. As we name how we've been complicit in the ashes of this world, help us to bear them in solidarity and hope. Amen. + (Cole Arthur Riley)

Please rise in body or spirit. The people's responses are in **bold type**.

 Our sanctuary is equipped with a T-coil hearing loop. Look for the blue sticker on the pews.

*HYMN 802

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

ST. COLUMBIA



5 Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
 thy unction grace bestoweth;
 and O what transport of delight
 from thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so through all the length of days
 thy goodness faileth never;
 Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
 within thy house forever.

Since its creation in the mid-19th century, this text has been one of the favorite paraphrases of Psalm 23 in the English-speaking world. That popularity increased in the early 20th century when *The English Hymnal*, 1906, first joined these words to this flowing Irish melody.

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

Gracious God, we pause for a moment, to pay attention to the gift of breath, which is as ancient as we are old, as new as this morning's dawn. (Pause)

By your Spirit, your Word is made new. In the hearing of Scripture, ancient and new, may we be inclined to speak the truth in loving kindness, obey the law of your love, and to keep your peace that passes all understanding. Amen.

FIRST LESSON: *Isaiah 58:1-12*

This is the Word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

PSALM 51 READING

Have mercy on me, O God, in your kindness;
in your compassion blot out my offense.

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

For I know my offenses,
my sin is always before me.

Against you, you alone, 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, in guilt I was born,
a sinner was I conceived.

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.

(Psalm continues on the next page.)

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me,
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Give me the joy of your saving help again,
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

Deliver me from death, O God,
and my tongue shall sing of your goodness,
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

For in sacrifice, you take no delight,
burnt offerings from me you would refuse,
The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a humble, contrite heart you will not spurn.

SECOND LESSON: *Matthew 5:1-12, 6:5-15*

This is the Word of the Lord!
Thanks be to God!

SERMON

Pray in Secret

Rev. John E. Morgan

THE LORD'S PRAYER

A. H. Mallotte (1895-1964)

Please join the choir in singing.

Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
in 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.

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVATION OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE (responsive)

Leader: Beloved in Christ, at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our deliverance from sin and death through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is the season of preparation for this great celebration, the means by which we renew our life in the Paschal mystery. We begin our Lenten journey by acknowledging our need for repentance, for in penitence, we name those things which damage us and others for what they really are, and we open ourselves to the One whose love knows no boundaries and whose mercy is demonstrated to us in the life of Jesus Christ. By taking an honest look at our lives and repenting of our foolishness; by praying quietly but with full hearts; by letting go of those things that harm us and by taking on works of love for others; by reading and feasting on God's Word, we observe a holy Lent, and prepare ourselves for the passion of Holy Week and the joy of Easter. Let us prepare ourselves to come to our God.

Before Christ, let us confess our sin, how it is with our life, and our lives together:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us. We have many treasures on earth that we hold too dearly; that we withhold from others in need. When we sin against neighbor, condone injustice, and quarrel with one another, we sin against you. Forgive us, we pray, for we are broken in spirit. Do not see us for our faults, and do not go away from us. Keep us always in your presence so that we may be restored to the joy of your salvation. Sustain in us a willing spirit to treasure what you desire; then our hearts will be opened in joy and gladness. In Jesus Christ, our Treasure, we pray. Amen.

KYRIE (responsive)

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

People: Christ, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

LITANY OF PENITENCE (responsive)

Leader: According to God's steadfast love, according to God's abundant mercy, God does not pass judgment on us the judgment we deserve.

All: God creates in us clean hearts and gives a new and right spirit. In the grace of Jesus Christ, we return to God forgiven. Praise God for our salvation!

INVITATION TO ASHES

Leader: We will continue our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes. Tonight, you will be marked with ash and in the sign of a cross. You will hear the words from Scripture, "From dust you came. To dust you shall return. Be at peace." This ancient sign and ritual speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, the truth of our impermanence and the need for Christ's love and light.

The sign with which we are marked reveals our desire to live repentant lives, individually and as the gathered beloved community, and our hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the name of Christ, we are invited to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and self-emptying love with practices of prayer and fasting; with works of loving kindness and mercy; and by meditating on God's good Word, ancient and new.

PRAYER OVER THE ASHES

Leader: From dust we came, to dust we shall return; and even yet, we sing "Alleluia" at the grave because death is not the end, only a sign of an impending resurrection. May these ashes tonight be for us a sign of our mortality, a desire for repentance, and a reminder that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

ANTHEM *Create in Me a Clean Heart* Matthew Culloton (b. 1976)

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

Cast me not away from thy presence,
and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of thy salvation;
and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
Wash me from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sins. (Refrain)

I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you alone, I've sinned
And done evil in your sight. (Refrain)

CLOSING PRAYER (unison)

Into your loving and merciful ways, Source of Being, we commend our lives. Accomplish in us, Holy One, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, the work of your saving grace. By the passion of our Savior, Jesus Christ, bring us with all your saints to the joy of Christ's resurrection. Amen.

THE SENDING

*HYMN 450

Be Thou My Vision
stanza 1-3

SLANE

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;
3 Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
4 High King of Heaven, my victory won,
(A) B-flat, (D) E-flat, (G) A-flat, (A) B-flat.
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
I ev-er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou mine in-her-i-tance, now and al-ways;
may I reach heav-en's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
(G) A-flat, (D) E-flat, (F#m7) Gm7, (A) A-flat, (Bb) B-flat.
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
thou my soul's shel-ter, and thou my high tower;
thou and thou on-ly, first in my heart,
Heart of my own heart, what - ev-er be - fall,
(Bm) Cm, (D/F#) E-flat/G, (G) A-flat, (D) E-flat.
wak-ing or sleep-ing, thy pres-ence my light.
raise thou me heaven-ward, O Power of my power.
High King of Heaven, my trea-sure thou art.
still be my vi-sion, O Rul-er of all.

*BLESSING AND CHARGE

Leader: As we leave this place marked with a sign of the cross, might we remember that our call as disciples in this season is to live a repentant life and to seek the good for the whole of creation. Life is short and we do not have long to make the way with those whom we love. Be swift to love. Make haste to be kind. And may the love of One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Mother of us all, be with us, now and forever. Amen and amen

Be Thou My Vision
stanza 4

SLANE

The service of worship concludes after the Blessing and Charge response.

❖ THOSE SERVING OUR LORD THIS EVENING ❖

PASTORS

John E. Morgan, Pastor
Pam Hrcir, Associate Pastor

MUSIC MINISTRY

Chris Bechtler, Director of Music
Norman Elton, Organist
WPC Chancel Choir

❖ UPCOMING WORSHIP INFORMATION ❖

- The season of Lent begins with our Ash Wednesday service this evening. **Our Wednesday Lenten worship services followed by lunch will continue at noon in Stevenson Hall on February 25, March 11 and March 25, and on March 4 and March 18 at 7pm in our sanctuary.** You may order box lunches for the noon services in Stevenson Hall online or at the table by the elevator or bring your lunch.

Holy Week begins with our regular 9:30 and 11am service on Palm Sunday, continuing with the Maundy Thursday communion service at 7pm, Good Friday Family Service at 5pm, and Tenebrae service at 7pm.

Easter services are at 8, 9:30, and 11am in our sanctuary.

Our Sunday School classes will not be held on Easter Sunday.

Our Church Office will be closed on Easter Monday and will reopen on the following Tuesday.

If you would like to learn more about Williamsburg Presbyterian Church visit our website located at mywpc.org.

- Join us for worship on the **1st Sunday in Lent, February 22, 2026, 9:30am and 11am** in the sanctuary. The Celebration of the Lord's Supper will be served at all services. The 11am service is broadcast on FM93.5 The Burg and AM740.
- Our services Wednesday afternoon and Sunday morning are a wonderful way to prepare our hearts and minds for the Passion and Resurrection of Easter Week. Worship services at WPC are open to all and we encourage you to invite your family and friends to join us.