

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026



ASH WEDNESDAY

God always forgive us....

1235 Summer Hill Road, Auburn, PA 17922
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Ash Wednesday
Sacrament of Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director and Pianist- Rae Ann Borger

(Communion note: This evening, we will commune at the rail as a sign of offering our whole selves to God.

When directed, please come forward, down the center aisle, receive and partake of the bread and wine.

After you have communed, please return to your seat by the side aisle. If you are physically unable to come forward, the pastor will serve you in the pew. The inside row of communion glasses on the tray contain white grape juice, The outside row of communion glasses contain red wine. Children are invited to come forward to receive a blessing.)

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

PRELUDE

The congregation may stand.

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung “Amen”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Repent and return to the Lord!

People: Repent? Wait . . . what did I do?

Pastor: Repent and return to the Lord!

People: Return? Wait . . . where did I go?

Pastor: Repent and return to the Lord!

People: Lord? Wait . . . is that you?

Pastor: Beloved, I am calling you home to me.

People: Lord, I am on my way.

OPENING HYMN NO. 61.....“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

SERVICE OF THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

Pastor: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.

People: The brokenness that hinders me, I lay before you.

Pastor: Come in your pain, acknowledging your hurt and accepting how you have hurt others.

(Time of silent reflection.)

Pastor: Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

People: All the pain I have in my life—the pain I have caused and the pain I feel—I lay before you.

Pastor: Come in your weakness, acknowledging your lack of confidence to do what is right.

(Time of silent reflection.)

Pastor: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.

People: The weakness that holds me captive, I lay before you.

Pastor: Come in your fear, acknowledging your failure to seek justice.

(Time of silent reflection.)

Pastor: Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

People: The fear that binds me, I lay before you.

Pastor: Come in your hesitancy, acknowledging your resistance to God’s call.

(Time of silent reflection.)

Pastor: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.

People: My hesitancy in doing your will, I lay before you.

Pastor: Come in your failings, acknowledging what you have done and left undone.

(Time of silent reflection.)

Pastor: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

People: The hollowness that saps my strength and leaves me lifeless, I lay before you.

Pastor: All that we are, all that we have done, all that we confess, we lay before you, O God.

People: Relieve the weight of the burden I lay before you. Amen.

PRAYER OF REPENTENCE

Pastor: Accept our repentance, O God, for the wrongs we have done. For our neglect of human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

People: Accept our repentance, O God.

Pastor: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

People: Accept our repentance, O God.

Pastor: For our waste and pollution of your creation and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

People: Accept our repentance, O God.

Pastor: Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

People: Favorably hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

Pastor: Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes remind us of our mortality and penitence and teach us again that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

The congregation may be seated.

Imposition of Ashes:

(At this time, everyone is invited to come down the center aisle to receive the sign of the cross with the ashes.

Please extend your hand if you prefer to have the ashes placed there.

Following your imposition, you may return to your pew by the way of the side aisles and be seated.

The Pastor will come to the pew for anyone unable to come forward.)

The congregation may stand.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: Joel reminds us that God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. With great mercy, God relents from punishing and calls us into fullness of life. In God's grace, know that you are forgiven.

People: In God's grace, know that you are forgiven.

Pastor: In God's mercy, know that you are made new.

People: In God's mercy, know that you are made new.

Pastor: In God's love, know that you are made whole.

People: In God's love, know that you are made whole.

ALL: Thanks be to God!

The congregation may be seated.

ENGAGING THE WORD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

READING OF THE WORD:.....Lector, Mike Fessler

Old Testament: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 (Page 839)

Psalms: Psalm 51:1-17 (Page 492)

Epistle Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 (Page 1006)

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (Page 839)

Lector: This is the Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

SENIOR CHOIR ANTHEM...“Out of Ashes”- Written by J. Johnson, G. Nelson and P. Marino; Arr. by Marty Parks”

MEDITATION.....“A Song of Repentance”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

The congregation may remain seated.

Ushers will receive tithes and offerings at this time.

HYMN NO. 483.....“Take Time to Be Holy”

The congregation may stand.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison)The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,

born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven,

and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;

the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERING RESPONSE & DEDICATION.....DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation:

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Communion Prayer:

The Seraphic Hymn

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full, are full of the majesty of Thy glory, Hosanna, Hosanna, hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!

The congregation may be seated.

Words of Institution:

Pastor: In this season, we remember the life and work of your Son, Jesus Christ.....In remembrance of these, your mighty acts on our behalf, we bring our whole selves to you as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Prayer of Consecration:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

Breaking of the Bread:

Lifting of the Cup:

Call to the Supper:

The Sharing of the Elements:

Blessing of the Children:

The congregation may stand.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison):

Loving God, in deep gratitude for this moment, this meal and this community of faith, we give ourselves to you. Take us out to live as forgiven and changed people. Ask much of us, expect much from us and enable and encourage us to touch many lives. Amen.

GOING WITH THE WORD

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastor: Beloved of God, as we open yourselves to God's transforming love for these forty days of Lent,

People: God will be with us as we weep for every part of ourselves that is fearful and broken.

Pastor: God will help us see, name, and release everything that would separate us from God's love.

People: God will show us how to receive and give love as generously as God does.

Pastor: Now receive this blessing: May your healing, loving life become a living prayer.

People: We will become one with God.

Pastor: Go in peace.

People: Amen.

THE THREEFOLD AMEN.....*Amen. Amen. Amen.*

RECESSIONAL HYMN NO. 589....."O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee"

SILENT MEDITATION

Acolytes take the Light out into the world.

POSTLUDE

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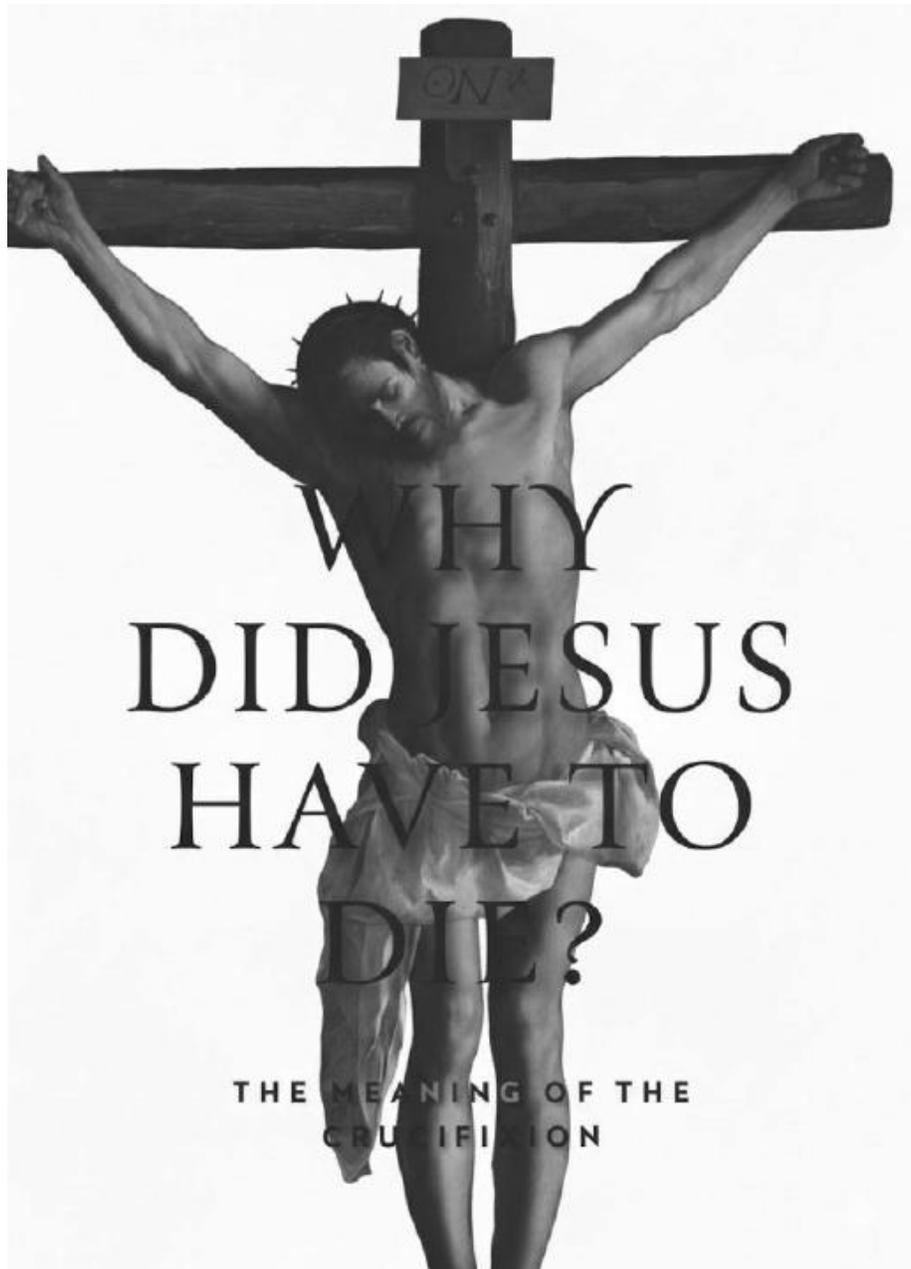
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PLEASE JOIN US!



St. Paul's UCC Wednesday Lenten Worship Services

February 25 through March 25 – each week at 7pm

The services, led by Pastor Ken, will be based on Adam Hamilton's Book, "Why Did Jesus Have to Die? The Meaning of the Crucifixion."

Pastor Ken will also be leading lessons from the book each Sunday during Lent at 9:15am in the downstairs Generations Adult Class in room B1.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.