

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

GATHERING MUSIC Dr. Kevin Chance

WELCOME Rev. Penny Ford

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION Dr. Lane McLelland

On this first day of Lent, we pause.
We look within and examine our souls.

**Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.**

Where we have neglected prayer, been apathetic in worship,
found reasons to avoid generosity or lacked compassion,

**Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.**

Where we have colluded in the oppression of those who
suffer and have turned a blind eye to evil around us,

**Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.**

When we have ignored those in our community and world
who have great need,

**Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.**

Where anxiety has eroded the gift of your peace,
and where we have cared too much about what others think,

**Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love.**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Bless the Lord who forgives our sins.

God's mercy endures forever.

God is merciful and just, eager to forgive,
ready to change our hearts and lives.

Let us enter the Lenten season together.

*HYMN *Lord, I Want to Be a Christian* #402

SCRIPTURE AND MEDITATION Rev. Penny Ford

ANTHEM

Dust, I Am

Mark Miller

THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES

Almighty God, from the dust of the earth you have formed us,
and from the dust of the earth you would raise us up. By the
redemptive power of the cross, create in us clean hearts and put
within us a new spirit, that we might know your forgiveness and
lead lives worthy of your calling. Amen.

IMPOSITION OF THE ASHES

*A minister will make the sign of the cross on your forehead
or hand with the palm ashes. Afterwards, you may pray
at the altar or return to your seat.*

* HYMN *When We Are Living* #356, vv. 1-4

* DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

*GOING FORTH

*Please stand as you are able

What Is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is a day of prayer and fasting that marks the
beginning of Lent. A minister place ashes on our forehead in the
sign of the cross as a reminder that we are created from the earth
(dust) and to dust we shall return. We remember our mortality
and God's precious gift of life. The cross reminds us of Jesus'
resurrection and the grace, hope and everlasting life before us.

What Is Lent?

Lent is the 40 days before Easter (Sundays are excluded, since
each Sunday is a celebration of the Resurrection). It's about one-
tenth of the year—a "tithing of time." During Lent, Christians
focus on simple living, prayer, fasting and service. Some people
give up something or take on a new practice to make more room
for God's Spirit. When we let go of distractions, God can shape
something new within us.

SERVICE, PRAYER, FASTING **Seven Disciplines to Try During Lent**

Technology Fast

When was the last time you went 24 hours without your phone? Try ditching your phone or laptop one day a week. Notice people and the world around you. If that feels like too much, try giving up cable news, your Xbox, or stop posting on social media one day or week. Reconnect with others IRL (in real life).

Create a Prayer Rhythm

Spend 30 minutes a day in silence and prayer. Take a daily walk. Practice a breath prayer—breathe out anger, fear, or anxiety; breathe in peace. Pray in the pauses of your day: at red lights, between tasks, or on the way to work or class.

Read Scripture Daily

Read one chapter a day. You could start with Matthew or the Psalms. Partner with a friend and meet weekly to share and pray.

Find one small way to tackle one big issue on your heart

Make one call. Give one donation. Have one hard conversation. Read one article. Write one letter. Help in one tangible way—then repeat.

Practice Forgiveness

Forgive someone who doesn't deserve it—maybe even yourself. Claim the tools you need: a counselor, a friend, a walk, tears, rest, space, or safety.

Change Your Eating Habits

Buy local and in season. Give up sugar, soft drinks, fast food, tea, or coffee. Learn about food deserts in Alabama and volunteer at the East Tuscaloosa Community Soup Bowl or support the Table of Grace Food Pantry.

Cultivate Gratitude

Each day or week, write a thank-you note to someone who has helped you, or a letter of encouragement to someone who is struggling. Be a blessing.

Ash Wednesday

*A Service to Begin
the Christian Season of Lent*
February 17, 2026, 5:30 pm



Trinity United Methodist Church
729 Paul Bryant Drive
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401