



February 18, 2026
Ash Wednesday
7:00 am, 12:00 pm, 6:00 pm

The Season of Lent

The season of Lent began as a time of preparation of candidates for Easter baptism and over the centuries became a season of repentance and renewal for the church as well. Ash Wednesday begins Lent with a call "...to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer and fasting, and self-denial, and by reading and meditation on God's holy Word." The recital of Psalm 51 is central to the observance of this fast as we acknowledge our transgressions before God and seek God's forgiveness.

On this day we impose ashes, remembering that we are dust and to dust we shall return. This reminder of our mortality also reminds us as Christians that through the mercy and grace of God we have received the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ. It is our Christian duty to prepare ourselves and our community of faith to receive the gift of the risen Lord and so on this day the Church invites you to the observance of a Holy Lent.

THE WORD OF GOD

Music Prelude at 12:00 pm and 6:00 pm:

Absolution in E minor Op. 49 no. 1- A. Guilmant

Celebrant: Let us pray.

The Collect of the Day

BCP, p. 264

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The First Lesson:

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near-- a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come. Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 103:8-14 (Spoken in unison.)

BCP, p. 733

- 8 The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.
- 9 He will not always accuse us, *
nor will he keep his anger forever.
- 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, *
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, *
so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, *
so far has he removed our sins from us.

13 As a father cares for his children, *
so does the LORD care for those who fear him.

14 For he himself knows whereof we are made; *
he remembers that we are but dust.

The Second Lesson:

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.' See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Hymn: (*Sung at 12:00 and 6:00 pm*) *Kind Maker of the World Appear* **H-152, vs. 1-3**

*Kind Maker of the world, O hear the fervent prayer, with many a tear
Poured forth by all the penitent who keep this holy fast of Lent!*

*Each heart is manifest to thee; thou knowest our infirmity;
Now we repent, and seek thy face; grant unto us thy pardoning grace.*

*Spare us, O Lord, who now confess our sins and all our wickedness,
And, for the glory of thy Name, our weakened souls to health proclaim.*

The Holy Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

'Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. '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. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. '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. 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. 'And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 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. 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

Priest The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Sermon

The Reverend W.R. "Rusty" McCown

Invitation to Observe a Holy Lent (*Please stand as you are able.*)

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because

of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith. I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is then kept for a time. Please kneel as you are able.

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Imposition of the Ashes (*The ushers will guide you when to proceed down the aisle*)

The Ashes are imposed with the following words:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Psalm 51 (*Spoken in unison*)

BCP, p. 656

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; *
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- 2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness *
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions, *
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against you only have I sinned *
and done what is evil in your sight.
- 5 And so you are justified when you speak *
and upright in your judgment
- 6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *
a sinner from my mother's womb.
- 7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
- 8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
- 9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, *
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- 10 Hide your face from my sins *
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 12 Cast me not away from your presence *
and take not your holy Spirit from me.
- 13 Give me the joy of your saving help again *
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
- 14 I shall teach your ways to the wicked, *
and sinners shall return to you.
- 15 Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.
- 16 Open my lips, O Lord, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- 17 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice; *
but you take no delight in burnt offerings.
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Litany of Penitence (*Please kneel as you are able.*)

Most holy and merciful Father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

Celebrant: 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.

People: Have mercy on us, Lord.

Celebrant: We have been deaf 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.

People: Have mercy on us, Lord.

Celebrant: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,

People: We confess to you, Lord.

Celebrant: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

People: We confess to you, Lord.

Celebrant: Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

People: We confess to you, Lord.

Celebrant: Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

People: We confess to you, Lord.

Celebrant: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

People: We confess to you, Lord.

Celebrant: Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done: for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

People: Accept our repentance, Lord.

Celebrant: 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, Lord.

Celebrant: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;

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

Celebrant: Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

People: That we may show forth your glory in the world.

Celebrant: By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

People: Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Celebrant: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live, has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe his holy Gospel. Therefore, we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

(Then the Ministers and People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.)

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Great Thanksgiving – Eucharistic Prayer B

BCP, p. 367

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

Sanctus (*Spoken at 7:00 am, sung* at 12:00 pm and 6:00 pm*)

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord. God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

S-124

...Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory.**

The Celebrant continues

...And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

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 trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

Fraction anthem (*Spoken at 7:00 am*)

Celebrant: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People: Therefore let us keep the feast.

Agnus Dei (*Sung at 12:00 and 6:00 pm*)

S-161

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: Grant us peace.

The Communion of the People

We invite all who seek God, and are drawn to Christ by the Spirit, to join us at this Table.

If you are unable to come forward, please notify an usher and we will serve you in your pew.

To receive a gluten-free host, please extend hands, crossed, palms down at the communion rail.

The Prayer after Communion

BCP, p. 366

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

The Blessing (*Please kneel as you are able.*)

There is no dismissal. Stay as long as you like.

When you leave, please do so in silence.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

510 W. Main Street, Franklin, TN 37064

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Church Office: (615) 790-0527 www.stpaulsfranklin.com

The Rt. Rev. John C. Bauerschmidt, *Bishop*

The Reverend W. R. "Rusty" McCown, *Rector*

The Reverend Monna Mayhall, *Associate Rector*

The Reverend Ann Van Dervoort, *Assisting Priest, Retired*

Donna Stokes-Rogers, *Music Minister* • Holli Scholz, *Organist*

Libby Sullivan, *Children's Minister* • Brett Smith, *Youth Minister*

Kristy Moore, *Finance Manager* • Shannon Buttrey, *Parish Administrator*

Paula Sherman, *Communications Manager* • Rachel Shoaf, *Nursery Coordinator*

PARTICIPANTS:

	7:00 am	12:00 pm	6:00 pm
Usher:	Jim Lambert	Ed Miller	Loren Robicheaux
Usher	*		Ed Miller
1 st Lesson/Psalm:	Jim Lambert	Robin Hensley	Judy Culver
2 nd Lesson:	Jim Lambert	Becky Gengler	Cindy Tumblin
Chalice Bearer:	Gerald Hancock	Katie Faulkner	Daniel Alvarado
Chalice Bearer:	*	Mike Gengler	Ann Denson
Altar Guild:	Laura McCown	Kathy Ulezelski	Phyllis Thompson
Organist:		Michael Epley	Holli Scholz

St. Paul's Prayer List

Susannah Pierce, Dave Berexa, Jack Honeycutt, Terry O'Donnell, Glenn Trahan, Sarah Lauricella, Robyn Painter, Jim Lauricella, Eliot Williams, Joy Craig, Jim Gray, Virginia Callicott, Sharon Collins, John Nickerson, Mary Suttle, John Looney, Andy McKinley, Cheryl Russell, Celia Skaggs, Bob Van Dervoort, Terry Cross, Elmer White, Inez Rice, Mason Hart, Neil Atkinson, Abu-Ali Abdur 'Rahman, Tom Stearns, Catherine Mayhew, Margaret Brown, Mary Emilie Acklen, Sam, Griffin, Michael, Martha, Fred, Meg and Fulton, Reed, Meg, Bob, Jim, Susan, Katie, Colton, Lynette, Bennett, John, Guy, JoAnn, Linda, Brittain and Strider, Beverly, Robin, Debbie, Pat, Kay, Benji, Victoria, Michael, Stanton, Wendi and Steve, David, Sara, Bill, Leda, Lance, Scott and Donna, Ellie, Jenn, David, Elizabeth, Madelinn, Mike, Ralph, Cheryl, David, Elizabeth, Theresa, Tim, Janelle, Tom, Rhoda, Bob and Gloria, Gary, Randy, Linda, and Wendi

Military

Currently deployed: Danny, Nick, Billy, Jacob, Roy, Nicholas, Daniel, and Chris

Currently serving in the Armed Forces: Tyler, Leelee, Michael, Drew, Lee, Emily, Larry, Zach, Jake, William, and Adria