

PASTOR'S INVITATION TO A HOLY LENT

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Christians have long observed with devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection. From the earliest days of the Church, the season of Lent has been kept as a time of penitence, prayer, and preparation for Easter. It is a season that calls us to remember the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to renew our baptismal faith.

I therefore invite you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and by reading and meditating on the Word of God. Let us bow before our Creator and Redeemer, humbly confessing our sins, and watching our hearts, that we may remain open to God's presence.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE ASHES *(in unison)*

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, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; only by your mercy are we made new; only by your steadfast love can we live in the joy of your salvation now and forever; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

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

*HYMN #400 *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

*BENEDICTION

Beloved, as you go from this place, go in the blessing of God who forgives, cleanses, redeems, and sustains us to observe a holy Lent, to cooperate with grace, and to encounter God's mercy anew each day. **All: Amen.**

*POSTLUDE

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The Beginning of Lent

February 18, 2026

6:30 pm

Gilmanton United Methodist Church

 **Church Office:**
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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10 am to 3 pm

Ash Wednesday



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

ECCLESIASTES 3:20

Welcome to this Ash Wednesday service.
As we begin the season of Lent,
may God meet us with mercy, grace, and truth.

*Indicates the congregation standing

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.
Welcome to this Ash Wednesday service.

Let us prepare our hearts for worship in silence and prayer, as we enter this holy season of Lent.

PRELUDE/LIGHTING CANDLES

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Brothers and sisters, we gather on this Ash Wednesday at the doorway of Lent.

We come remembering that we are dust, and that we need God's mercy.

Hear the prayer of the psalmist: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love."

Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

Even from the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them."

We come to hear that prayer, and to place our lives within God's grace.

Come, let us worship God.

*OPENING PRAYER (in unison)

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 brokenness, may receive from you full pardon and new life. As we enter this season of Lent, grant us grace to walk in repentance and faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*HYMN #269 *Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us now call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed.

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.

Lord, have mercy.

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.

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

Our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

We confess also, O Lord, that we have neglected your Word. We have not received it as our daily bread, but ignored it when it called us to repentance. We have lived in spiritual hunger of our own making, not because your Word was absent, but because we refused to eat.

Lord, have mercy.

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.

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgements, for uncharitable thoughts towards our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt towards those who differ from us.

Accept our repentance, Lord.

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,
that we may show your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

(Silence is kept: Confess your sin)

THE LORD'S PRAYER (in unison)

Threefold Amen #898

SCRIPTURE READING (responsive) Psalm 51:1-17 (#785-786)

HYMN #354 *I Surrender All*

GOSPEL READING Luke 23:33-38

MESSAGE

*HYMN TWFS #2138 *Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes*

Pastor Kim