

Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

7:00 PM

*Congregation is invited to rise if able and comfortable.

Readings in **BOLD** are to be read in unison.

Hymnals: UMH is Red or Purple-TFWS is Black-W&S is Green

Please note that this service is being recorded and viewed on social media.

Ash Wednesday was developed as a day of penitence to mark the beginning of Lent, the forty days of preparation for the celebration of Easter, in which believers seek a deeper experience with the Lord through reflection, Bible study, fasting, confession, repentance, and other forms of self-denial.

Ash Wednesday is a particular time for new beginnings in faith, a time for returning to the Lord. On this day we recall our mortality and wait upon the Lord for a renewing Spirit. This is a time for putting aside the sins and failures of the past in the light of who we are yet to become by the grace of God. Ash Wednesday gets its name from the burning of last year's Palm Sunday branches which are mixed with olive oil and imposed upon the forehead or the back of the worshipper's hand. This is intended to be an intentional act of confession and repentance.

WE GATHER

On the enclosed paper you are invited to write down all that has you crying out to God tonight and/or separates you from your relationship with God.

THE PRELUDE

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST ENTERS OUR MIDST

A Wilderness Wandering People W&S 3113, v.1

We are a wilderness wandering people on a journey of the soul.

May we find our destination in our longing to be whole.

Our Holy God is calling to us.

**With Jesus by our side may compassion be our compass;
may the Spirit be our guide.**

THE INVITATION INTO THIS LENTEN SEASON

Pew Bible, OT 847

Joel 2:12-17

*THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Beloved in Christ, we gather on this holy night to be marked by truth.

We come remembering that we are dust—and beloved by God.

We come seeking God, not just with words, but with our lives.

Teach us the fast you choose, O God.

A fast that loosens injustice and restores community.

A fast that turns us toward love and mercy.

Come, let us worship the God who meets us here.

We worship the One who says, "Here I am."

*THE HYMN OF INVITATION

TFWS 2138

Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes

THE PSALTER

Psalm 51:1-17

UMH 785-786

THE ANTHEM

Create in Me a Clean Heart

Johnson

Chancel Choir

THE EVENING PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy and merciful God, we confess that we often seek you without allowing you to change us. We fast, but cling to comfort. We pray but resist transformation. We long for your presence yet, turn away from the cries of our neighbors.

We confess that we have practiced faith without always practicing love. We have bowed our heads but not always opened our hands.

Forgive us, O God. Break what binds us. Heal what is wounded. Turn our repentance into renewal, and our ashes into acts of mercy, we pray. Amen.

THE WORDS OF GRACE AND PARDON

The God who calls us to repentance does not turn away from us in our weakness. When we cry out, God answers, not with condemnation—but with presence.

God says to us even now: *"Here I am."*

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven, restored, and sent.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

THE LESSON FROM THE PROPHET

Isaiah 58:1-12

Pew Bible, OT 658

THE SERMON

The God We Can Know:

Rev. Jill Hubbard-Smith

"Here I Am"

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

THE INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE

THE BLESSING

Blessing The Dust

Jan Richardson

THE BAPTISMAL REMEMBRANCE AND CLEANSING OF OUR SINS

As the Spirit leads, move by the side aisles to the rear of the sanctuary with your paper. Then in repentance, move down the center aisle to the Baptismal font, put your paper into the water and swirl the water. As you do so, remember your baptism and be thankful.

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES AND ANOINTING

Continue to the front of the sanctuary to receive the ancient sign of repentance, the mark of ashes, on the back of your hand or forehead. Then as a symbol of forgiveness and healing you will be anointed with oil.

As you receive the ashes, you are invited to declare:

"Forgive me, God, for I have sinned."

As you receive the oil, you will be told,

"Your sins are forgiven; God loves you."

You may respond by saying, **"I know I am loved."**

THE HYMN OF RESPONSE *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy* UMH 121

THE PRAYER FOR GOD'S BELOVED CHILDREN

Gracious God, we thank you for a love that doesn't make sense. We praise you for grace, that doesn't seem possible. We love you for a new beginning that doesn't come fast enough. We know about our sin, about your grace, about our pain, about your love, and that you are our God...

Prayers of Intercession for All God's Children...

(During this time of intercessory prayer, there will be a period of silence.

Please feel free to lift up any names or places that are on your hearts.)

... in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

May the God of the ashes be with you.

And also, with you.

On this night, let us offer our hearts to God.

We open them, so we may be filled with a renewed Spirit in this Lenten season.

Let us lift glad thanksgiving to our God.

We offer praise to the One who gives us the strength for this journey.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Sanctus

TFWS 2257- b

THE CONSECRATION

Memorial Acclamation

TFWS 2257- c

THE BLESSING

Amen

TFWS 2257- d

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE SHARING THE LOAF AND THE CUP

The invitation to share God's covenant love through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ is extended to all. We will serve by **intinction**. You are invited to come by the center aisle, receive a piece of the bread, dip it into the cup and partake. Return to your seats by the side aisles. The chancel rail is always available if you would like to take some time to pray. You are invited to reflect in song as all are being served. GLUTEN FREE elements are available.

THE HYMN DURING COMMUNION

Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast UMH 616

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

Creating God, still center of the world you have made, we come to you in this season of turning and returning. You come into our ordinary lives and set a holy table among us, filling our plates with the bread of life and our cups with salvation. In this meal, we return to you and we turn toward you. We thank you that you hear the cries of our troubled conscience and conflicted spirit. Having received your grace and been renewed by your Spirit, send us forth in this Lenten season with the tenderness to touch an ordinary everyday world with the promise of your holiness. Amen.

*THE HYMN OF DEDICATION UMH 269, vs. 1,4,5
Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

*THE SENDING FORTH *Marked By The Cross* Elizabeth A. Long-Higgins

*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST LEADS US INTO THE WORLD
As We Go W&S 3183

**As we go, may your Spirit go before us.
As we go, may we follow where you lead.
May we live what we have learned, share the message we have heard,
and be a light unto the world as we go.**

*THE POSTLUDE
*There is an offering plate at the sanctuary entrances
for those who wish to offer tithes and gifts tonight.*

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**Our Service Of Worship Has Ended
Our Worship Through Service Begins**

Words of Welcome

Welcome to this service of worship. We pray this service offered an opportunity to engage with the Divine. If we can be of service to you in any way, please let us know. If you are looking for a church to call home, please consider joining together with us, where we help each other grow in faith, love, and service.

For Your Information

- There are **hearing devices** to assist you to experience the service more clearly with our streaming team, in the rear of the sanctuary. Feel free to pick one up.
- A **rocking chair** is available for the comfort of parent and baby, in Blair Chapel, behind the pews.
- To access the **restrooms**, please exit the side door to the right of the lectern/chancel area. In the hall, make a left into Fellowship Hall and follow the signs. There are **infant changing tables** available in the restrooms.
- **Large print hymnals** are available. Please ask an usher.

Our Leadership Team Serving Us This Evening

GREETER: Pamela Lynch
LAY READER: Tim Haider
ACOLYTE: Joy More

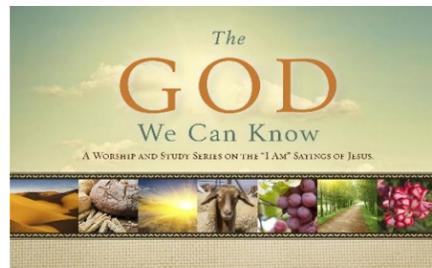
Pastor: Rev. Jill Hubbard-Smith **Secretary:** Joy More

Director of Music: Denise Furda **Sexton:** Lisa Costello

Streaming Team: Chip Stoll, Rob Crowther, Johnny Tocci

Director of Wesley Nursery School: Noel Worthington

Director of Music Emeritus: Gary Farquhar



Our Lenten Worship and Study Series is based on *The God We Can Know: Exploring the "I Am" Sayings of Jesus.* by Rob Fuquay

Sunday Worship: Feb. 22 through Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026

9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Lent 1 - Feb. 22: *Knowing the Great "I Am."* Exodus 3:1-14

Lent 2: March 1: *"I Am the Bread of Life."* Knowing God's Satisfaction.

John 6:27-59 with Holy Communion

Lent 3: March 8: *"I Am" the Light of the World: Knowing God's Guidance.*

John 7:2, 14, & 8:12

Lent 4: March 15: *"I Am" the Good Shepherd: Knowing God's Care.*

John 10:1-10

Lent 5: March 22: *"I Am" the True Vine: Knowing God's Power.*

John 15:1-8

Palm Sunday (Lent 6) March 29: *"I Am" the Way, the Truth, and the Life:*

Knowing God's Way. John 14:1-7

Study and Small Group Sharing:

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. & Wednesdays at Noon

In Wesley Hall, downstairs and to the left of our parking lot entrance.

Tuesdays: Feb. 24, March 10, March 17, March 24

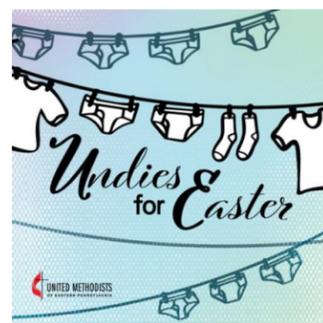
(Note: Not March 3)

Wednesdays: March 4, March 11, March 18, March 25

(Note: Not Feb. 25)

Daily Devotional: Available each Sunday for the coming week.

If you would like them mailed or emailed to you, please contact Joy in the First UMC Office at 732-531-1150.



Our Lenten Mission

... is to Prison Inmates who receive only ONE pair of underpants and no undershirts or socks when they arrive. Can you imagine living with only one pair of underpants? In this season of Lent, you are invited to step out in faith and reveal God's tender love by caring for their basic needs. Donations of Hanes white socks, white tee shirts, and white underpants are welcomed to the church until **March 22nd.** OR make your purchase on

Amazon via the ministry's gift list and have it delivered to the EPAUMC Prison Ministry P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820 by **March 29.**



First UMC of Oakhurst

...is a community of faith committed to Christ, seeking to learn the needs of others and responding with Christian love.

9:30 a.m. Worship Every Sunday Morning In Person & Streaming

103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst, NJ 07755

732-531-1150

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Oakhurst.umcchurches.org

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CCLI #1588788

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**11:00 a.m. Worship Every Sunday Morning In Person at
First UMC located at 103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst**

Mailing Address: PO Box 214, West Long Branch, NJ 07764

office@oldfirstumchurch.org