



Ash Wednesday

12:00 p.m. + February 18, 2026



*To exalt the Beloved is to practice religion.
To exalt the self is to practice paganism.
Would you become a pilgrim on the Path of Love?
The first condition is that you become as humble as dust and ashes.
Know that when you learn to lose your self, you will reach the Beloved.
There is no other secret to be revealed.
Ansari of Herat*

Welcome and Invitation

Opening the Heart

"Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

*Come, thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace.
Streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it, mount of thy redeeming love.*

*Here I raise my Ebenezer, here by thy great help I've come.
And I hope by thy good pleasure safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger wandering from the fold of God.
He to rescue me from danger interposed his precious blood.*

Praying a Psalm

adapted from **Psalm 1** (*Sometimes an Unknown Path* - Jerry Webber)

*Some paths we walk give us life.
Even as we expend energy on them, they regenerate us.
Some paths we walk take life from us.
In walking these paths, our lives are made small, and the life within us is diminished.*

*There is a path on which blessing and life come upon us:
when we are oriented toward You, God;
when we listen with our hearts to Your Word,
opening ourselves to be shaped by Your life-giving speech,
meditating on Your presence, centering and grounding our lives;
when we embrace truth, not shrinking from what is real,
from truth about ourselves, You and the world;
when we are not invested in deceiving You,
others or ourselves as if we are more or less than we truly are;
when we do not flatter ourselves so much that we think we are our image;
the one who sees through that lie is blessed, able to see all persons as sisters and brothers,
and to see even the evil in others in light of the brokenness from which it comes. . . .*

*There is another path on which our lives, love and energy are diminished:
when we orient life around ourselves;
when we live self-protective lives;
when we compare ourselves to others and compete in order to create "winners" and "losers";
when we tear others down in order to build ourselves up;
when, in our self-interest, we step on others – even those we don't know,
even those half-a-globe away – in order to accumulate more for ourselves. . . .*

*I live with feet on both paths, God. My life is a confused ordering of mixed motives.
I pray for the courage to daily orient myself more and more toward You,
and the grace to be honest with myself and You, when I don't. Amen.*

Song of Response

"Come thou Fount of Every Blessing"

***Oh to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be.
Let thy goodness like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.
Here's my heart, oh take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.***

Listening to the Words of Life

Matthew 6:5-8

*And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites.
For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and at the street corners,
that they may be seen by people.
Truly, I say to you, they have their reward.
But you, when you pray, enter into your inner chamber.
And having shut your door, pray to your Father, the One in the Secret.
And your Father, the One seeing in the secret, will reward you.*

Response: "Lord, have mercy!"

"Kyrie" (Ukrainian Orthodox)

Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Listening to the Words of Life

Matthew 6:16-18

*And when you fast, do not be as the hypocrites, with a sad countenance.
For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to people as fasting.
Truly, I tell you, that they have their reward.
But you, when fasting, anoint your head and wash your face.
That you may not appear to be fasting to people but to your Father, the One in the Secret.
And your Father, the One seeing in the secret, will reward you.*

Response: "Christ have mercy!"

"Kyrie" (Ukrainian Orthodox)

Christe eleison. Christe eleison. Christe eleison.

Meditation

Lenten Fasting and Feasting

William Arthur Ward

*Fast from judging others; **feast on the God indwelling in them.**
Fast from emphasis on differences; **feast on the Reality of life.**
Fast from words that pollute; **feast on phrases that purify.**
Fast from discontent; **feast on gratitude.**
Fast from anger; **feast on patience.**
Fast from pessimism; **feast on optimism.**
Fast from worry; **feast on trust.**
Fast from complaining; **feast on appreciation.**
Fast from negatives; **feast on affirmatives.**
Fast from unrelenting pressures; **feast on unceasing prayer.**
Fast from hostility; **feast on nonviolence.**
Fast from bitterness; **feast on forgiveness.**
Fast from self-concern; **feast on compassion for others.**
Fast from personal anxiety; **feast on eternal truth.**
Fast from discouragement; **feast on hope.**
Fast from facts that depress; **feast on truths that uplift.**
Fast from lethargy; **feast on enthusiasm.**
Fast from suspicion; **feast on truth.**
Fast from thoughts that weaken; **feast on promises that inspire.**
Fast from idle gossip; **feast on purposeful silence.**
Gentle God, during this season of fasting and feasting,
**gift us with your Presence, so we can be a gift to others
in carrying out your work. Amen.***

Silence for Reflection

During these three minutes of silence, reflect on the above list.
From what on this list do you need to fast this Lent? On what do you need to feast?

Song of Response

"Circle Me"

***Circle me, O God.
Keep faith within, keep doubt without.
Circle me, O God.
Keep calm within, keep turmoil out.
Keep life within, keep death without.
O circle me, O circle me.***

Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes

You may receive Holy Communion by taking a piece of the Bread and dipping it into the Cup. After receiving Communion, you may receive the ashes on your forehead, pray at the altar, and light a candle as a symbol of your prayer intention.

A Lenten Prayer of Awakening *adapted from Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim, Edward Hays*

Come, O Life-giving Creator, and rattle the door latch of my slumbering heart.

Awaken me as you breathe upon a winter-wrapped earth, gently calling to life the virgin Spring.

Awaken in these fortified days of Lenten prayer and discipline my youthful dream of holiness.

*Call me forth from the prison camp of my numerous past defeats and my narrow patterns of being
to make my ordinary life extra-ordinarily alive, through the passion of my love.*

*Show to me during these Lenten days how to take the daily things of life and by submerging them
in the sacred, to infuse them with a great love for you, O God, and for others.*

*Guide me to perform simple acts of love and prayer, the real works of reform and renewal of this overture
to the spring of the Spirit.*

***O Father of Jesus, Heart of my heart, help me not to waste these precious Lenten days
of my soul's spiritual springtime.***

Receiving a Good Word



Haley Brown – Associate Director of The Anchor House

Courtney Garrison – Ministry Assistant

Rev. Rachel Sciretti – Associate Pastor

Peter Johns – Associate Director of Contemplative Worship

Zachary Montasser – Violinist

Christian Ibanez – AV Production

Rev. Dr. Michael Sciretti, Jr. – Pastor of The Center

Today's Music

"Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" – Robinson & Wyeth,

"Kyrie" – Traditional, ***"Circle Me"*** – Peter Johns.

For information about The Center for Christian Spirituality and upcoming events, visit:

www.TheCenterFCS.org.

If you have a prayer request or seeking support, please contact Rachel Sciretti, rscoretti@chapelwood.org.