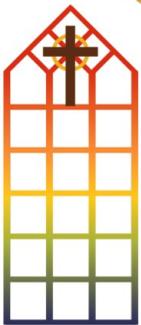


# COMMUNITY ASH WEDNESDAY



February 18, 2026  
at First Presbyterian  
Church Covington, GA

✠ You are invited to stand in body OR in spirit ❖

# Gathering As God's Beloved People

## Gathering Music

*Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty*

John B. Dykes

*Morning Has Broken*

Traditional Gaelic Melody

*What a Friend We Have in Jesus*

Charles C. Converse

Becky Ramsy, piano; Alice Walker, organ

## Invitation to Worship

## Chiming of the Hour

## Prelude

*Be Thou My Vision*

Charles C. Converse

Becky Ramsey, piano; Alice Walker, organ

## Welcome & Announcements

*Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane*

## ✠ Call to Worship

**If God threw a party, all would be invited.**

**If God hosted a dinner, there'd be a seat saved for each of us.**

**If God prepared a banquet, a cheer would go up when you arrived**

**This is the good news:**

**God is throwing a party. God is hosting a dinner.**

**God is preparing a banquet, and all are invited.**

**Let us worship this invitational God.**

## ✠ Hymn of Praise

*Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes*

BEACH SPRING

***Sunday's palms are Wednesday's ashes as another Lent begins;***

***thus we kneel before our Maker in contrition for our sins.***

***We have marred baptismal pledges, in rebellion gone astray;***

***now, returning, seek forgiveness; grant us pardon, God, this day!***

***We have failed to love our neighbors, their offences to forgive,***

***have not listened to their troubles, nor have cared just how they live,***

***we are jealous, proud, impatient, loving over much our things;***

***may the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.***

*(cont.)*

***We are hasty to judge others, blind to proof of human need;  
and our lack of understanding demonstrates our inner greed;  
we have wasted earth's resources; want and suffering we've ignored;  
come and cleanse us, then restore us; make new hearts within us, Lord!***

## ✦ **Call to Confession**

*Alisa Castilla*

Family of faith, if someone declines our invitations again and again, in our human ways, we tend to stop inviting them. We get the hint. We assume they'd rather be elsewhere. With God, however, things are different. No matter how many times we overlook or ignore God's outstretched hand, God will never stop reaching for us. So with that good news in mind, let us go to God in prayer.

## ✦ **Community Confession**

**Loving God, you invite us deeper into faith, deeper into relationship, and deeper into community. You invite us to your table, but we cling to the wall. We RSVP "Maybe." We come up with excuses for why we can't attend. Forgive us for doubting the invitation, and forgive us for doubting our worth. Show us how to respond to you with confidence instead of hesitancy, and joy instead of doubt. With gratitude we pray, amen.**

## ✦ **Confessional Hymn 698**

*Take, O Take Me as I Am*

TAKE ME AS I AM

***Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be;  
set your seal upon my heart and live in me. (Repeat)***

## ✦ **Assurance of God's Love & Forgiveness**

*Alisa Castilla*

Friends, no matter how many times we mess up, no matter how many times we lose our way, no matter how many times we decline God's invitation, God will never stop inviting us to the table. There is and always will be a seat saved for you. So join me in these good news words: We are forgiven, again and again. We are invited, again and again. We are loved, from beginning to end. Thanks be to God, our Inviter.

Church, we are forgiven!

**We are free to try again.**

## ✠ Hymn 166

*Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days*

ST. FLAVIAN

***Lord, who throughout these forty days for us did fast and pray,  
teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.  
And through these days of penitence, and through this Passiontide,  
yes, evermore, in life and death, O Lord, with us abide.***

## Blessing of the Dust

written by Jan Richardson

*Rev. Becky Baker*

## Imposition of Ashes

Lent is a time for us to return to our Creator who formed us from the dust of the earth. Our lives are finite, so we want to spend every precious moment in tune with God, living whole, abundant lives—the kind of lives we were created to lead. And so in recognition of our origins in the earth, in acknowledgment of our finite days, we come to receive ashes and remember: dust we are, and to dust we shall return.



## *Proclaiming the Word*

### **Anthem**

*Have Mercy on Me*

by Clayton White

CFUMC & FPCC Chancel Choirs

Krista Firkus, soloist

### **Prayer for God's Wisdom & Understanding**

*Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane*

### **Scripture Reading**

*Luke 14:15-24*

Pew Bible page 77

### **Message**

*The Good News is... All are invited*

Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane



## *Responding to the Word*

### **Silent Reflection**

### **Special Music**

*Amazing Grace*

Traditional American Melody

Becky Ramsey, piano; Alice Walker, organ



## *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*

### **Invitation to the Table**

*Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane*

We believe in a table-setting God  
who always has a seat saved for you

**We believe in an inviting God**

**who leaves the porch light on and a hand extended**

We believe in a radically welcoming God  
who eats with the overlooked and the outcast,  
the hungry and the downtrodden

**We believe in the good news of the gospel,**

**which reminds us that**

**all are welcomed,**

**all are celebrated,**

**all are loved,**

**and all are claimed**

Pull up a seat at God's table.

There is good news to be shared here.

### **The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving & The Lord's Prayer** *Rev. Agnes Harvey*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us  
not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## Words of Institution

Rev. Dr. Royeese Stowe

## Communion of the People

*Church, you are invited to partake with bread and cup upon hearing the words "The gifts of God for the people of God." We recognize Christ is present with us as the Body of Christ in our sanctuary and in our homes this day. May the Holy Spirit dwell with you as we participate in the sacrament of communion together. One bread, one body!*

**You may choose to receive prepackaged or gluten-free communion elements which are available at the Lord's table.** See our *Worship Practices* section for more details.

## Prayer After Communion

Rev. Doc Hall

**Holy God, as we leave this space, may we be awestruck by the beauty of the world while holding the pain, the hurt, and the tears of your people. May we overflow with love for those around us. May we be effusive with hope and quick to point out joy. And in our living, and breathing, and being, may we find ourselves this Lent binding our wandering hearts to you. May this Lenten journey change us for the better. From dust we were created, and dust we shall return. Beautiful, holy, messy, grace-filled dust, we pray. Amen.**



## *Being the Church in the World*

✦ **Sending Hymn 435**

*There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

IN BABILONE

✦ **Benediction**

✦ **Please exit in silence**



## Worship Practices

**Communion**—All are invited to come forward to take communion. The ushers will guide you to two stations on either side of the Lord’s table to receive the bread and the cup. You may choose to receive prepackaged communion elements or a gluten-free option which are available at the Lord’s table. If you are not physically able to come forward and would still like to receive communion, please let an usher know and it will be brought to you. Communion elements are taken to the nursery for children to participate in the sacrament. If you would not like to receive communion, you are welcome to stay in your seat for a time of prayerful reflection.

**Worship Art**—Today’s worship guide cover art is a digital drawing with collage inspired by Luke 14:15-24 titled “There Is Still Room” by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman. The following is the artist’s statement on the piece:

*This image is meant to be viewed from the center, moving outward. The host sets a table, with arms stretched wide in welcome. Surrounding this initial invitation, the first invitees form a ring of rejection around the host—arms crossed, closed off, and distracted by their material wealth and status. One surveys their vast vineyard, another counts their livestock, and the third navigates the economics of joining two households.*

*Trees, rooted in the central scene of the guestless table, break through the ring of rejection. The next layer includes four figures—with the host's same open-armed posture—extending welcome to people in neighborhoods, markets, and communal spaces. In the parable, the initial invitation is cast more broadly; everyone is welcome despite any status or condition that might typically isolate them from community. The invited reject, but the rejected are embraced. In the art, the welcoming branches of the tree bear good fruit. The invitation continues to grow and flourish despite all the worldly barriers that would keep us apart and isolated. In the final ring, a crowd is gathered around an even larger table, one that still has open seats.*

*It can be easy to focus on what feels negative in this text, but in order for the invitation to truly be an invitation, it cannot be coercive. There must always be the*

*option to decline the invitation, and even that is good news. Still, the deeper good news is this: the host never stops inviting, and when all is said and done, there is still room at the table.*

**Accessibility**—A limited supply of large print worship guides and hymns are available in the narthex. Please return the large print binder to an usher at the end of worship so it may be updated for next week. If you'd like to learn about connecting your Bluetooth hearing aids to our Sanctuary sound system we invite you to talk to our Tech Team.

**Use**—One License #A-728728 authorizes the use of music printed in our worship guide and streamed online. \*Messages and data rates may apply when using Text to Give. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel. Lenten Series: "Tell Me Something Good" | Liturgy by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | Art: "There Is Still Room" by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



## *Serving Today*

First Presbyterian Church Covington | Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane, Alisa Castilla  
Covington First United Methodist Church | Rev. Dr. Royeese Stowe, Rev. Doc Hall  
Grace United Methodist Church | Rev. Agnes Harvey  
Gum Creek Presbyterian Church | Rev. Becky Baker  
Music | Mark Fiddie (FPCC), Becky Ramsey (CFUMC), Alice Walker (FPCC)  
Tech Team | Dan Walden, Brad Hawley, Laramy Wells  
Usher Chair | Hardy Sideris



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