



Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday

Welcome to The Beloved Community at The Trees, an Episcopal faith community exploring together what a life of faith “outside of a church” may be. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, we believe that all people are God’s beloved and all are welcome, regardless of race, gender identity, sexual identity, ability, faith background, or belief.

In our Baptismal Covenant, we affirm that we will strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being. To remember our baptismal promises, that all are God’s beloved, and that we are all one in Christ, we begin each worship gathering with the “Blessing of the Water.”

Our liturgy for Ash Wednesday is borrowed from our siblings in The Anglican Church of Australia.

Blessing of the Water

Adapted from Prayer Over the Water, The Church of England

Reader We praise you, loving God,
for the gift of your Son Jesus.
He was baptized in the River Jordan,
where your Spirit came upon him
and revealed him as the Son you love.
He sent his followers
to baptize all who turn to him.

Celebrant Now, loving God, we ask you to bless this water,
that those who are baptized in it
may be cleansed in the water of life,
and, filled with your Spirit,
may know that they are loved as your children,
safe in Christ for ever. ***Amen.***

Opening Acclamation

Celebrant Blessed be the Lord who forgives all our sins,
People **whose mercy endures for ever.**

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**

Celebrant As far as the east is from the west, so far has God set our sins from us.
People **Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy**

Opening Song

Softly And Tenderly

*Words and Music by
Will Lamartine Thompson*

VERSE

♩ = 120
(Optional chords in parentheses)

G G/B D7/A G C G A7/E A7

1. Soft ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for you and for
2. Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for you and for
3. Time is now fleet - ing, the mo - ments are pass - ing, pass - ing from you and from
4. O for the won - der - ful love He has prom - ised, prom - ised for you and for

D G G/B D7/A G C G G/B C G/D D7

me; See, on the por - tals He's wait - ing and watch - ing, watch - ing for you and for
me? Why should we ling - er and heed not His mer - cies, mer - cies for you and for
me; Shad - ows are gath - er - ing, death - beds are com - ing, com - ing for you and for
me; Tho' we have sinned He has mer - cy and par - don, par - don for you and for

CHORUS

8

G D7 G D G D/A E7 A7 D D7

me. Come home, come home, Ye who are wea - ry, come home;
me? (Come home) (come home)
me.
me.

13

G D/A G/B C G G/B C G/D D7 G

Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly, Je - sus is call - ing—Call - ing, “O sin - ner, come home!”

Opening Prayer

Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made,
and you 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 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, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Narrative Lectionary Theme ~ The Good Shepherd

Introduction by Chris Reed

The First Lesson

Psalm 23 ~ First Nations Version Psalms and Proverbs: An Indigenous Bible Translation

Grandfather is my shepherd. My lodge will always have plenty.

He gives me rest in fields of tender sweetgrass and guides me near quiet and peaceful waters.

Through these good medicines, he brings strength to my body and healing to my soul. He shows me the good way to walk with firm steps on the road of life, to bring honor to his name.

Even if my path takes me through the canyon of darkness and gloom, I will fear no evil, for you are close by my side, keeping my eyes straight, my path safe. Your walking stick and chief's staff bring comfort and peace to me.

You prepare a great feast for me as my enemies watch. You honor me with a headdress of many feathers. My cup is filled to overflowing with life-giving water.

Your goodness and love, which remain strong and true, will chase after me on the path of life all of my days. Grandfather's longhouse will always be my home.

Quiet Reflection on the Reading

The Gospel

John 10:1-18

Deacon The holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John.

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

“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and

bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

Deacon The Gospel of Christ.

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

Quiet Reflection on the Reading

Lectionary Discussion

What did the Holy Spirit bring to your attention? What good news did you hear?

During this time you are invited to share your thoughts, questions, or insights about our readings.

The Act of Penitence

Siblings in Christ, from the earliest days of the Church, Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

At first this season was observed by those who were preparing for baptism at Easter and by those who, having been excommunicated, were to be restored to the communion of the church.

By keeping these days with care and attention
Christians might take to heart
the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness
proclaimed in the gospel, and grow in faith and
devotion to our Lord.

So, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer and fasting,
by self-denial and acts of generosity
and by reading and meditating
on the word of God, let us keep a holy Lent

Quiet Reflection

The Receiving of the Ashes

Celebrant Blessed are you, God of all creation.
 You are eternal,
 we are mortal,
 formed from the dust of the earth.
 As we receive these ashes, make them a sign for us
 of repentance and returning to you.
 Breathe into us again the breath of life.

People **Blessed be God for ever.**

Celebrant Come, receive the sign of ashes.

You are invited to come forward for the imposition of ashes.

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

People **Amen.**

Litany

Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth,

have mercy on us.

Incarnate Word, redeemer of the world,

have mercy on us.

Abiding Spirit, giver of light and life,

have mercy on us.

For turning away from your presence,
for disobeying your word and commandments,

forgive us, Lord.

For trusting in our own strength instead of yours,
for betraying your trust and the trust of others,

forgive us, Lord.

For resisting your grace and refusing your blessings,
for holding back from proclaiming our faith in you,

forgive us, Lord.

For damaging this earth and exploiting its creatures,
for neglecting and wasting the gifts you have given us,

forgive us, Lord.

For failing to forgive as we have been forgiven,
for judging others and bearing grudges,

forgive us, Lord.

For skimping on our commitments and relationships,
for failing in hospitality,

forgive us, Lord.

For tolerating oppression, injustice, and wrong,
for keeping silent when we should have spoken up,

forgive us, Lord.

For turning away when others have offered us love,
for closing our hearts when others have needed compassion,

forgive us, Lord.

For all we have done unkindly, unjustly and dishonestly,
for our careless speech and hurtful words,

forgive us, Lord.

Most merciful God,

**we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:**

we have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;

we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.

God, forgive us.

**Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Absolution

Celebrant With our hearts turned to God in repentance,
with the knowledge of our sins
laid bare before the cross of Jesus Christ,
in the name of the living God,
your sins are forgiven.
Receive God's mercy,
take hold of your forgiveness,
and, in the power of the Holy Spirit,
walk in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

The Peace

Celebrant Christ has reconciled us to God in one body the cross.

People **We meet in Christ's name and share in Christ's peace.**

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Announcements

During this time we will share announcements for The Beloved Community at The Trees and others.

The Offering

Celebrant But do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

You are invited to share your gifts, financial or other, with the gathered community. During this time of preparation for the Holy Community, you are also invited to remember your baptism.

Savior, like a shepherd lead us

The Hymnal 1982, #708

1 Sa - vior, like a shep - herd lead us; much we need thy
2 Ear - ly let us seek thy fa - vor, ear - ly let us

ten - der care; in thy plea - sant pas - tures feed us;
learn thy will; do thou, Lord, our on - ly Sa - vior,

for our use thy folds pre - pare. Bless - ed Je - sus!
with thy love our bos - oms fill. Bless - ed Je - sus!

Bless - ed Je - sus! Thou hast bought us, thine we are.
Bless - ed Je - sus! Thou hast loved us: love us still.

The musical score is written for two voices (Soprano and Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in the key of D major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a clear structure of four lines of music. The lyrics are printed below the vocal lines, with two verses indicated by the numbers 1 and 2. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and simple rhythmic patterns that support the vocal lines.

Words: *Hymns for the Young*, ca. 1830, alt. Music: *Sicilian Mariners*, Sicilian melody, from *The European Magazine and London Review*, 1792.

The Holy Communion

Eucharistic Prayer 3, The Anglican Church of Canada

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 our thanks and praise.**

All **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.

Celebrant We give thanks to you, Lord our God,
for the goodness and love
you have made known to us in creation;
in calling Israel to be your people;
in your Word spoken through the prophets;
and above all in the Word made flesh,
Jesus your Son.
For in these last days you sent him
to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.
In him, you have delivered us from evil,
and made us worthy to stand before you.
In him, you have brought us out of error into truth,
out of sin into righteousness,
out of death into life.

On the night he was handed over
to suffering and death,
a death he freely accepted,

our Lord Jesus Christ took bread;
and when he had given thanks to you,
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples,
and said, “ Take, eat:
this is my body which is given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.”

After supper he took the cup of wine;
and when he had given thanks,
he gave it to them,
and said, “Drink this, all of you:
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it,
do this for the remembrance of me.”

Therefore, Father, according to his command,

All **we remember his death,**
we proclaim his resurrection,
we await his coming in glory;

Celebrant and we offer our sacrifice
of praise and thanksgiving
to you, Lord of all;
presenting to you, from your creation,
this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God,
to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts,
that they may be the sacrament
of the body of Christ
and his blood of the new covenant.
Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice,
that we, made acceptable in him,
may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time,
reconcile all things in Christ,

and make them new,
and bring us to that city of light
where you dwell with all your beloved;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
the firstborn of all creation,
the head of the Church,
and the author of our salvation;

by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours,
almighty Father,
now and for ever.

All **Amen!**

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

All **Our Lord that is in heaven:
blessed be your name.
Your dominion come:
your will be done
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us today our next day's bread:
and forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And leave us not prey to temptation:
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the dominion: the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.

People **We, being many, are one body,
for we all share in the one bread.**

Celebrant The gifts of God for the people of God!
People **Thanks be to God.**

Time for Prayer and Reflection

We will observe a few moments of quiet for personal prayer and reflection following the Eucharist. You are invited to pray where you are or move about the space. Deacon Dan is available for healing prayers and anointing during this time.

Taizé & Contemplation

Eat This Bread 709

The musical score is written for two voices (Soprano and Bass) and piano accompaniment. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The second system also has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: 'Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and nev-er be hun - gry.' and 'Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst.' The music is in a simple, contemplative style with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Text: John 6; adapt. Robert Batastini, b. 1942, and the Taizé Community
Music: Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994
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BERTHIER
irregular

Translation: Where true charity and love abide, God is dwelling there, God is dwelling there.

Post Communion Prayer

Celebrant Let us pray.

Celebrant All your works praise you, O Lord.

People

And your faithful servants bless you.

Gracious God

we thank you for feeding us

with the body and blood of your Son

Jesus Christ.

May we, who share his body,

live his risen life;

we, who drink his cup,

bring life to others;

we, whom the Spirit lights,

give light to the world.

Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,

so that we and all your children shall be free,

and the whole earth live to praise your name;

through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing

Celebrant

God of life and death,

from the fullness of yourself

you have created all that is; through the power of your love

you call us towards you;

in the giving of your Son

our salvation has been wrought.

Our flowering and our passing,

all the seasons of the vine,

belong to you.

Bless us now and in all our days,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Beloved remember, You are one in whom Christ delights and dwells.

You live in the strong and unshakeable kingdom of God.

The kingdom is not in trouble, and neither are you.

And the blessing of God almighty,

our most holy, glorious and undivided Trinity,

be among you this day, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Deacon Go in the peace of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

We are grateful for our sending parish, The Church of the Nativity, Raleigh, who supported The Beloved Community with their presence, prayer, and resources for our first year.

We are grateful for the use of The Trees, graciously provided to us at no cost by St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Durham. We also give thanks to St. Philip's for the gift of flowers and printing. Each Sunday, St. Philip's shares their flowers with The Beloved Community so that we too may enjoy the beauty of God's creation.

We acknowledge that we are gathering on the ancestral territory of the Eno, the Tuscarora, the Occaneechi, and others.

We are grateful that you are with us. Your presence is a gift to The Beloved Community at the Trees, and that is enough. If you would like to support our community financially, you can do so by leaving your offering in the basket.

The Beloved Community at The Trees

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