

The background is a deep purple color. In the upper left and lower right corners, there are green palm fronds. In the center, there is a white cross made of ash. The word 'Ash' is written in a white, elegant cursive font at the top, and 'WEDNESDAY' is written in a white, bold, serif font below it.

Ash  
WEDNESDAY

*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins  
may be wiped out, that times of refreshing  
may come from the Lord. ACTS 3:19 (NIV)*

**Welcome to Shiloh United Church of Christ**  
**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE**  
**February 18<sup>th</sup> 2026**

**MEDITATION** From *Freedom of Simplicity* by Richard J. Foster)

*When Arsenius, the Roman educator who gave up his status and wealth for the solitude of the desert, prayed, “Lord, lead me into the way of salvation,” he heard a voice saying, “Be silent.” Silence frees us from the need to control others. One reason we can hardly bear to remain silent is that it makes us feel so helpless. We are accustomed to relying upon words to manage and control others.... We want so desperately for them to agree with us, to see things our way. We evaluate people, judge people, condemn people. We devour people with our words. Silence is one of the deepest Disciples of the Spirit simply because it puts the stopper on that.*

**PRELUDE**

“Lord Jesus, Think on Me”

Peterson

**GREETING**

Pastor: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

Pastor: Why have we gathered today?

**All: We gather to confess our sins and bring a sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart to God, who forgives us and frees us for joyful obedience. Today, we join one another and Christ on the road to the cross and commit ourselves to the Lenten journey ahead of us.**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP** (By *Tim Graves; on LiturgyBits*)

One: For just such a time as this,  
we were made.

In the image of God,  
loving, grace-giving, and wise,  
we are created to be the hands,  
hearts, and feet of divinity.

**All: We gather on this Ash Wednesday,  
not because we must,  
not to puff ourselves up,  
but to start out on the trail  
leading to the resurrection.**

One: In the softness of evening,  
in the solace of silence we come to you, O Lord.

**All: We come for acceptance;  
we come for community;  
we come for forgiveness and love.** *(By Lisa Lisa Frenz)*

**\*PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

One: Let us pray!

**All: O God, passionately righteous and just,  
we are not always righteous and just.  
Do not cast us away from your presence.  
We bring to you broken and contrite hearts.  
O God, steadfastly loving and merciful,  
accept our worship and have mercy on us. In Jesus' name we  
pray. Amen.**

**\*HYMN**      *"On a Hill Far Away"* (The Old Rugged Cross)      #195

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

One: Let us pray!

**God, this is a hard time. The focus of Lent is on the pain and suffering of Jesus and our own need for penitence. It is a time of gathering darkness. But we would rather skip this part and go straight to Easter. We would rather ignore the suffering—in you and in the world—and avoid the hard work of true self-examination. Forgive us for wanting this to be bright and painless and easy, when we know that Jesus did not take the easy way, but chose the path of the Cross. Teach us the true meaning of penitence, so that we use this Lenten season to humbly seek a clean heart and a renewed spirit. We pray in the name Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Silence*

## ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

The truth is this: God's love and mercy are never-ending. God knows us in our inward being; God cleanses us from our sins and shortcomings, and restores to us the joy of salvation.

## WITNESS TO OUR SACRED STORY

First Lesson: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Second Lesson: Psalm 51:1-17

## CHANCEL CHOIR

*"People Need the Lord"*

*Arr. McDonald*

Third Lesson: Matthew 6:1-6, 19-21

## MEDITATION

*"Treasure in Heaven"*

Pastor Melinda

## \*HYMN

*"Change My Heart O God"*

Insert

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

One: Let us pray for the needs of the whole world, saying:  
**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Holy God, as the season now turns to Lent, we pray that you will guide us in the days ahead. As we journey with Jesus Christ, give us an abiding sense of your presence, an unguarded sense of ourselves, and an awareness of the needs of this world.

**All: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Loving God, as we are marked with the ashes of earth, we bring before you the frailty of our very human lives: the fragility of our health, the tenuousness of our accomplishments and plans, the changing nature of even our closest relationships.

**All: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Almighty God, grant us patience in suffering and healing from our ills. Give us in equal measure humility and hope in our pursuits.

Bind us in covenantal love that is both constant yet able to change according to the needs and circumstances before us.

**All: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Just God, you call us to care for those in need and to lift the burdens that bind others. We ask you to increase our courage and our will to work for the peace you envision and demand. We pray for an end to warfare and conflict, accepting our calling to be peacemakers. We pray for an end to hunger and homelessness, knowing we are called to share our bread and to open our doors.

**All: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Eternal God, Heavenly Father, we pray that your kingdom will come in fullness; that what is perishable will be raised imperishable; and that death itself will be swallowed up in victory; through Jesus Christ, our Savior who has taught us to pray saying:

**All: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

## **PRESENTING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS BEFORE GOD**

### **INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. *Ephesians 5:2*

**\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE** “A Lenten Doxology”

**Praise God throughout these forty days.  
Praise Christ, our Lord, whom God did raise.  
And praise the Spirit who imparts  
God’s love in Christ into our hearts. Amen.**

## **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**Great God, who created us and continues to sustain us in this world, we give you thanks and praise for the blessings we have received through your bountiful grace. Use our lives and the resources you have given us, so that we may glorify you in all we say and do. Unite us in our journey of faith, that we may strengthen and support one another as we minister to all in need in this world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

### **DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES**

*Those who desire may come forward where ashes will be imposed. You may receive ashes on your forehead or the back of your hand.*

Pastor: Ashes are a symbol of purification. As a fire burns, it can separate what is valuable from what is valueless, just as an assayer's fire can separate a base metal from one that is precious. In this same way, these ashes are pure. They are a symbol of the new space that is now present within us for a new life. Let us claim the new life Jesus offers us by praying to our God:

**All: God of love and mercy, we come to you in prayer, seeking to change our hearts and minds. Burn away the power of old sins and old attachments in our lives. In place of old ways fill us with the new fire of your Holy Spirit. Open up new opportunities for us to follow Jesus in loving you and our neighbors. In Jesus Name. Amen.**

Pastor: Friends, receive the good news of our faith: in the name of Jesus, I announce that your sins are forgiven. The old has died. Behold, the new has come! **Amen.**

*Those who wish, now come forward and receive the mark of these ashes as a sign of your forgiveness and new life.*

Pastor: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. **Amen.**



---

*No matter who you are,  
or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here at  
Shiloh UCC,  
where God is still speaking."*

---

### THE CHURCH STAFF

**Pastor** *Rev. Melinda LaMontagne, Ph.D.*  
**Email** [pastormelinda@shilohuccyorkpa.org](mailto:pastormelinda@shilohuccyorkpa.org)  
**Phone** 717-764-3569  
**Pastor Melinda office hours:** Tues., Wed. and Thurs. 9AM-1PM  
**Director of Music** Stephanie Limbert  
**Organist** Sandra Bamberger  
**Family and Youth Ministry Coordinator** Brandi Shoff  
**Email** [FamilyandYouthMinistry@shilohuccyorkpa.org](mailto:FamilyandYouthMinistry@shilohuccyorkpa.org)  
**Missionaries in Costa Rica** Sally Jane and Crosby Johnson  
**Early Learning Center Director** Allison Hartnett  
**Admin Assistant** Courtney Olschefski  
**Office Email** [office@shilohuccyorkpa.org](mailto:office@shilohuccyorkpa.org)  
**Website:** [www.shilohuccyorkpa.org](http://www.shilohuccyorkpa.org)  
[www.facebook.com/shilohuccyorkpa](http://www.facebook.com/shilohuccyorkpa)

