

Ash Wednesday

First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint and Sandpoint United Methodist Church

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

Catherine Lyle, Pastor

Annie Welle, Piano; Dana Stockman, Choir Director

OPENING MUSIC & LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

WELCOME & INVITATION TO LENT

HYMN #298

“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

RESPONSIVE PRAYER

Jane “Even now,” declares the Lord, “Return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

Susan We come, Lord, not only to confess our sins, but to confess the ways we have ignored the cries of the oppressed.

People We return to You, O Lord. Restore us in Your mercy.

Jane Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love.

Susan We have wandered, turning away from the hungry, the stranger, the brokenhearted— but Your mercy calls us home.

People We return to You, O Lord. Teach us to love as You love.

Jane Today we mark our foreheads with ashes, a sign of our mortality, a reminder that from dust we came and to dust we shall return.

Susan Yet in Christ, dust is not the end— for You breathe life into what was dead, and You call us to breathe life into a weary world.

People We return to You, O Lord. Breathe Your Spirit into us.

Jane The fast You choose, O Lord, is to loose the chains of injustice, to set the oppressed free, to share bread with the hungry, and shelter with the homeless.

Susan Let this be the beginning of our journey to the cross—a season of turning, of listening, of walking humbly with our God, and of doing justice, loving mercy, and living in Your light.

People We return to You, O Lord. Make us instruments of Your justice and peace.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

SCRIPTURE READING

Amos 5:21-24

CHORAL ANTHEM

“Create in Me”

POEM

“Ashes” by Rev. LaTrelle Miller Easterling

“Just and Loving God, As the ashes are spread down my forehead I am reminded of the gift of grace you endured for our new beginning. You were

deserted, but you did not desert us. You were despised, but you did not despise humanity. You were ridiculed, but you did not ridicule the guilty. You withstood the darkness to offer us light. I receive the ashes. I draw closer to you. I receive the ashes. As the ashes are spread across my forehead I am reminded of your love for all people. Your love is from everlasting to everlasting. Your love knows no worthy or unworthy. Your love cannot be bought through wealth nor acquired through fame. Your love is complete. I receive the ashes. I draw closer to humankind. I receive the ashes. As I wear these ashes on my forehead may they make a lasting impression upon my heart to be more emptied of self, and more centered in you. I receive the ashes. I walk the path toward your waters of renewal. I receive the ashes. Amen.”

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

CLOSING HYMN #2104 “An Outcast Among Outcasts” (*Sing the Faith*)

BENEDICTION

CLOSING MUSIC & FOLLOWING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

WORDS TO SONGS

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There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy

There’s a wideness in God’s mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There’s a kindness in God’s justice,
Which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth’s sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven;
There is no place where earth’s failings
Have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of the mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful,
We would gladly trust God’s word;
And our lives reflect thanksgiving
For the goodness of our Lord.

An Outcast among Outcasts

An outcast among outcasts,
Dismissed with double scorn,

Belittled by the labels:
“unclean” and “foreign born”–
Came back with thanks for Jesus,
And then went on his way:
An outcast among outcasts
Showed grateful faith that day.

An outcast among outcasts,
where three were crucified,
Derided by the others
As they hung side by side–
Came back from death with power,
God had the final say:
An outcast among outcasts
Shows God to us today.

For outcasts among outcasts
The boundaries are redrawn,
By word, “Your faith has saved you,”
By cross and Easter dawn.
The distant longed-for centers
Of power, peace, and care,
Where life is free to flourish,
Are found now everywhere.