



Hagerstown Church of the Brethren

February 18, 2026

7:00 PM

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Hagerstown, Maryland

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE **7:00 PM**

February 18, 2026

WELCOME

PRELUDE "Ah, Holy Jesus" (Chesterton)

CALL TO WORSHIP Chris Stockslager, Worship Leader

One: We have left many important pursuits to gather here. In these moments, worship is of first importance.

All: Together, we begin a season of self-examination. We begin a humble walk with God through Lent.

One: This is a time for building spiritual disciplines. Those disciplined by Christ become disciples.

All: We seek to follow in the steps of Jesus. We want to walk in the paths where Christ leads.

One: May God empower us here with genuine righteousness. Let patience, kindness, and truthful speech prevail.

All: We seek knowledge and the will to live by it. We seek community and the capacity to share it.

OPENING PRAYER

Send your Holy Spirit on this gathering of seeking people, O God of our salvation. Open our hearts to receive your gifts. Open our minds to think new thoughts. Open our hands in generous sharing. Open our lips to declare your praise. Keep us from pious pretension, that we may approach you with genuine yearning to please you, not to impress others. We hear you calling us: Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation. Here we are, God. We seek your healing touch. Amen.

HYMN #521 "Come, thou fount"

[Verse 1]

Come, thou fount of ev'ry 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 God's unchanging love.

[Verse 2]

Here I raise my Ebenezer, hither by thy help I'm come, and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home. Jesus sought me when a stranger, wand'ring from the fold of God. He, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.

[Verse 3]

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

OLD TESTAMENT READING Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 OT 846

Blow the trumpet in Zion;

sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,

for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—

2 a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds and thick darkness!

Like blackness spread upon the mountains,

a great and powerful army comes;

their like has never been from of old,

nor will be again after them

in ages to come.

12 Yet even now, says the Lord,

return to me with all your heart,

with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

13 rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the Lord your God,

for he is gracious and merciful,

slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,

and relenting from punishment.

14 Who knows whether he will not turn and relent

and leave a blessing behind him,

a grain offering and a drink offering

for the Lord your God?

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion;

consecrate a fast;

call a solemn assembly;

16 gather the people.

Consecrate the congregation;

assemble the aged;

gather the children,

even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her canopy.
17 Between the vestibule and the altar,
let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep.
Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"

CALL TO CONFESSION

The prophet Joel warned that the day of God's coming would be full of clouds and gloom. Yet, God, would be merciful to all who turned back with their whole being to worship and walk in God's way. As we gather in this solemn assembly in response to God's invitation, we ask God to spare us, to make us whole and to restore us to faithful service in Christ's name.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Psalm 51:1-17)

One: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.
*All: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me
from my sin.*
One: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned and done what is evil in
your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless
when you pass judgment.
All: Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.
One: You desire truth in the inward being; therefore, teach me wisdom
in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
*All: Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have
crushed rejoice.*
One: Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
*All: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit
within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not
take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your
salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.*
One: Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return
to you. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my
salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

All: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.
One: For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt
offering, you would not be pleased.
*All: The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and
contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

TEMPLE CHOIR "Create In Me a Clean Heart" (Arr. Rhodes)

INTRODUCTION TO THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

In our Scriptures, we read that our spiritual ancestors would sometimes cover themselves in ashes as a public demonstration of their penance – an outward expression of their repentance for having sinned. Many Christians continue that practice on Ash Wednesday. Having confessed our sins before God and one another, those who wish may now come forward and receive the mark of these ashes as a sign of your repentance and total dependence upon God.

All are welcome to come forward to receive ashes at this time –
either on your forehead or the back of your hand.

"Remember, my sister/brother, that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

A PRAYER AS WE BEGIN LENT: Letting Go

O God, help us to use this season of Lent to examine our attachments, and to sense where You invite us to live more simply and deeply.

Shine the light of Your love into the private corners of our lives where we have acquired so much clutter that it has begun to restrict our freedom.

Grant us the strength to free ourselves from appetites and needs that drive us into taking, having and wanting more than we need or have time for.

Teach us that in letting go we become free, rather than deprived, generous rather than covetous, and spacious rather than restricted.

We offer You our Lenten observance, and today we place our feet on the road to Easter, and walk the Way that You have walked before us. Amen.

***HYMN #533**

"Jesus, my Lord, my God, my all"

[Verse 1]

*Jesus, my Lord, my God, my all, hear me, bless'd Savior, when I call.
Hear me, and from thy dwelling place pour down the riches of thy grace.
Jesus, my Lord, I thee adore. Oh, may I love thee more and more.*

[Verse 2]

*Jesus, too late I thee have sought. How can I love thee as I ought?
And how extol thy matchless fame, the glorious beauty of thy name?
Jesus, my Lord, I thee adore. Oh, may I love thee more and more.*

[Verse 3]

*Jesus, what didst thou find in me that thou hast dealt so lovingly?
How great the joy that thou hast brought! Oh, far exceeding hope or thought!
Jesus, my Lord, I thee adore. Oh, may I love thee more and more.*

[Verse 4]

*Jesus, of thee shall be my song. To thee my heart and soul belong.
All that I am or have is thine, and thou, my Savior, thou art mine.
Jesus, my Lord, I thee adore. Oh, may I love thee more and more.*

***BENEDICTION**

May God create in you a clean heart,
a transformed heart,
a heart that knows and seeks and loves
the justice and mercy of the Lord.

May you accept the gift of salvation –
not your personal possession to be coveted,
but His work, accomplished in the destruction of Sin
on the cross of Jesus Christ.

And may you humble yourself before the Lord,
coming before Him with a broken spirit,
a contrite heart
receiving from His hand
great compassion
and unfailing love.

POSTLUDE

"I Bind My Heart to Thee"

(Ritter)

*Please be seated and use these moments during the postlude for a time of
reflection. Burton will be playing...*