



Ash, Mike Moyers

“What does it mean that we don’t just talk about the ashes, or even reverently observe them, but that we physically smear them across our faces? Perhaps, in the marking, we approach solidarity. We remember that the same fate that haunts you, haunts me. The same beauty that birthed you, lives in me. And that this comes as a mark on the body, I think, reminds us that the Lenten journey of self-examination is deeply entwined with the physical world.

As we mark ourselves with these ashes, we remind ourselves that no grief is solitary. That what has stricken you is also carried by me. We begin our Lenten journey together, reminding one another that we are those whose flesh grows back. We are those who remain. It is not easy, but we cling to this: God has always seen sacred potential in the dust.”

+ Cole Arthur Riley, *Black Liturgies*

“But still, like dust, I’ll rise.”

+ Maya Angelou

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## First Baptist Church on Fifth, Winston-Salem

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026 • 6:00 PM

Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our forty-day journey to Easter. During this season the people of God are called to reflect on the meaning of their relationship with Christ — his life, death, and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. But what seems like an ending is really an invitation to return to God. With the cross on our brow, we set our hearts on the spiritual renewal made possible through the Good News of Easter, awaiting us at the end of this holy season.

### PRELUDE

Jacob Hill, Organ

### INVITATION TO WORSHIP

Emily Hull McGee

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Amy McClure

Leader: We gather in the dimness of evening

**All: to be with God who brightens the shadows of our lives.**

Leader: We gather in the quiet of this place

**All: to be with Jesus, knowing that nothing past, present, or future separates us.**

Leader: We gather to be marked as disciples,

**All: to be fed for the journey through Lent, to be sealed by the Spirit as God’s own.**

\*HYMN 471: *Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy*

RESTORATION

## TRANSFORMATION OF THE SANCTUARY

RESPONSE: *My Prayers Rise Like Incense*

A. Duba



## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Mary Kaylor

Leader: On this night, we begin our journey to Easter.  
Before we can take the first step, we must admit  
how we have not been faithful to our God.  
Let us pray together, saying:

**All: We have trouble telling the truth, God of broken hearts,  
yet we must admit on this night how we have trouble being your people.  
We may not trample the poor, but we sometimes walk right past them.  
We don't receive bribes, but we are more privileged than many around us.  
We trust more in ourselves than in you,  
and spend far too much time patting ourselves on the back,  
rather than holding out a hand to others.  
Where can we go for forgiveness but to you, O God of the ashes?  
When we are greedy, you promise to be gracious.  
When we have trouble confronting injustice, you stand at our side.  
When we struggle to seek good, you point us to Jesus,  
our Brother, our Savior, who shows us how to turn our back on evil  
and to follow him wherever this Lenten journey may lead us.**

*(A silence is kept.)*

Leader: Friends, God refuses to stand far off, but comes close to us,  
to hear our prayers, to touch our hearts with forgiveness  
and to walk with us during this holy season and beyond.

**All: We have no need to go anyplace else  
but into the comforting and restoring heart  
of the One who loves us.  
Thanks be to God.  
We are forgiven. Amen.**

\*HYMN 171: *What Wondrous Love Is This*

WONDROUS LOVE

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Kyle Caudle

Leader: The word of God for the people of God.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

HOMILY: “A People Displaced”

Emily Hull McGee

IMPOSITION OF ASHES AND CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

\*HYMN OF RESPONSE 168: *I Take the Cross of Jesus Christ*

KINGSFOLD

\*SENDING FORTH

Emily Hull McGee

Leader: Smudged this night with the ashes of penitence,

**All: we will go out to share God’s forgiveness  
with those we have hurt,  
with those who are forgotten.**

Leader: Fed this night by the Host of the feast of grace,

**All: we will go out to bring healing to the broken,  
to offer grace to those trampled by the powerful.**

Leader: Called this night to journey through suffering to new life,

**All: we will go out to stand with those experiencing injustice,  
to share the Spirit’s peace and reconciliation with the world.**

*(Please depart in silence.)*

\*Those who are able will please stand.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are labyrinth meditation packets available for all ages on the side tables to accompany your Ash Wednesday observance.

# Displaced

## Lenten Worship at First Baptist on Fifth

Writer Iain Chambers says, “to be a stranger in a strange land, to be lost... is perhaps the condition most typical of contemporary life.” This experience of dislocation, of displacement, of being disconnected from the familiar trappings of home is one that touches each corner of our living when we move through a season of it. From our politics to our relationships, our bodies to our emotions, perhaps none of us are exempt from seasons of displacement. This Lent at First on Fifth, we’ll hear stories of people who experienced displacement – from communities, from belief, from themselves – and how God was made known to them and to us, even - especially! - when we’re far from home.

February 18 | Ash Wednesday

*A People, Displaced*

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Communion and the Imposition of Ashes

February 22 | The First Sunday of Lent

*The Ones in the Wilderness, Displaced*

Matthew 4:1-11

March 1 | The Second Sunday of Lent

*Nicodemus, Displaced*

John 3:1-17

March 8 | The Third Sunday of Lent

*The Well Woman, Displaced*

John 4:5-29, 39-42

March 15 | The Fourth Sunday of Lent

*The Man Born Blind, Displaced*

John 9:1-41

Mary Kaylor, proclaimer

March 22 | The Fifth Sunday of Lent

*Lazarus, Displaced*

John 11:17-45

March 29 | Palm Sunday

*A City, Displaced*

Matthew 21:1-11

April 2 | Maundy Thursday

April 3 | Good Friday Tenebrae

April 5 | Easter Sunday

*The Gardener Indeed*

John 20:1-18



FIRST BAPTIST  
ON FIFTH

501 West Fifth Street, Winston-Salem NC 27101 | 336.722.2558 | [firstonfifth.org](http://firstonfifth.org)

BOLD LOVE. BOUNDLESS COMPASSION.