



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 18, 2026 • 6:30 PM

Reaching Out to ... Welcome. Worship. Share. Serve.

† *For those who are able, please stand.*



Don't Look Up inspired by Isaiah 58:1-12

The Isaiah text prophesies to a community preoccupied with religious observance that draws the gaze “upward” to God, but neglects the people and matters that are most important to God. God is not calling for fasts and religious rituals that only focus heavenward. As the community has focused on things above, they persist in injustice below. The people have exalted themselves above their kindred and wondered why God has not responded to them. Meanwhile, God is shining light on what they’ve neglected below—that is to say, their own community. The person depicted here is fixing their gaze upon a light source that is just below and to the side of them. This is an invitation to stop elevating one’s worship and oneself above one’s siblings and peers, for it is there that God may be found.

PRELUDE

“Be Still, My Soul”

WELCOME

Rev. Kate Colussy-Estes

OPENING PRAYER

† **CALL TO WORSHIP**

ONE: We gather together at the edge of a new season.

ALL: We stand together on the cusp of something new.

ONE: Will we wade into self-reflection?

ALL: Will we invite honesty to dance?

ONE: Will we listen for God’s invitation?

ALL: Will we seek deeper faith?

ONE: What kind of fast do we choose? What kind of faith will we build?

ALL: We gather together at the edge of a new season. Let us worship God!

† **HYMN** (*see insert*)

“Sign Us with Ashes”

(*refrain only, 3x*)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Shari Freeman

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 58:1-12

SERMON

“Is this the fast that I choose?”

LITANY OF CONFESSION

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

ONE: Merciful God, how many times in a day could we choose love?

ALL: How many times could we choose justice?

ONE: How many times could we speak kindly to ourselves?

ALL: How many times could we offer grace?

ONE: How many times, God? And how often do we miss it?

ALL: Forgive us for choosing the path you did not travel.

ONE: Forgive us for hitching our horse to the world’s measure of goodness, instead of yours.

ALL: Return our hearts to you, and guide us continually, even in the parched places.

ONE: With gratitude we pray,

ALL: Amen.

† **IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

PRAYER AFTER IMPOSITION OF ASHES

† **CLOSING HYMN (#85)**

“What Wondrous Love Is This”

† **BENEDICTION**

Rev. Shari Freeman

POSTLUDE

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

arr. Marvin Gaspard

Leading Today’s Worship Service

Rev. Kate Colussy-Estes, Interim Senior Pastor

Rev. Shari Freeman, Associate Pastor

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt, Associate Pastor

Rev. Kate Hurst Floyd, Senior Pastor Sandy Springs UMC

Jill Hudson, Music Director & Organist

Chancel Choir

Liturgy from A Sanctified Art
Image and description from
Rev. T. Denise Anderson

We are located at:
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