



The PresbyRecord

A community beacon of faith, love and hope.

Volume LX Issue 2

February 2026

Ash Wednesday and the Beginning of Lent: A Season of Honest Reflection and Hope

As February unfolds, our congregation enters a sacred stretch of the Christian year—a time shaped by reflection, renewal, and the quiet work of God within us. This month brings us to Ash Wednesday, the solemn doorway into Lent, and invites us to begin a journey that leads from dust to resurrection, from confession to transformation, from the wilderness to the joy of Easter morning. While winter still lingers outside, the church begins a season of spiritual thawing, opening our hearts to the renewing grace of God.

Ash Wednesday sets the tone for this entire season. With the simple act of receiving ashes on our foreheads, we are reminded of our mortality and our dependence on God. The words spoken over us—“You are dust, and to dust you shall return”—are not meant to discourage but to ground us in truth. They remind us that life is fragile, that we are not self-made, and that our hope rests in the One who formed us from the dust and breathes life into us still. The ashes are not a badge of holiness or a sign of spiritual achievement. They are a shared confession that we all fall short, and a shared hope that God meets us with mercy.

This ancient practice has deep roots. In the early church, Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of a season of repentance for those seeking restoration to the community. Penitents would begin their journey of healing and discipline on this day, culminating in reconciliation on Maundy Thursday. It was also the day when catechumens—those preparing for baptism—were formally enrolled for a period of learning and spiritual formation leading to baptism at Easter. These traditions remind us that Lent has always been a season of turning, learning, and returning to God with open hearts.

Throughout February, as the days slowly lengthen, we join Jesus in the wilderness. We hear again the stories that shape this season: Noah waiting through the flood, Moses receiving the law on Sinai, Elijah journeying to Horeb, Jonah calling Nineveh to repentance, and Jesus facing temptation in the desert. Each of these forty-day journeys teaches us that transformation takes time, intention, and courage. Lent invites us to slow down, to pray more deeply, to fast from what distracts us, and to give generously to those in need. These practices are not burdens but gifts—ways of clearing space in our lives so that God’s renewing work can take root.

At the heart of Lent lies the paschal mystery: the pattern of dying and rising that shapes the life of every Christian. Paul’s bold words, “I die every day,” remind us that following Christ means letting go of the old self so that new life can emerge. Lent gently loosens our grip on the things we cling to—our routines, our comforts, our illusions of control—and invites us to trust the God who brings life out of death. The ashes we receive at the start of the season symbolize not only our mortality but also the promise that God can bring beauty from dust.

As February moves us closer to Holy Week, we begin to look toward the journey that lies ahead: the Upper Room, the cross, the tomb, and the dawn of Easter morning. The path is not always easy, but it is filled with grace. Lent prepares us to walk this path with open eyes and open hearts, ready to encounter the fullness of Christ’s love. The season reminds us that resurrection is not a sudden leap but a steady walk—one shaped by prayer, humility, and trust.

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This month, as our congregation gathers for worship, study, service, and fellowship, may we embrace the invitation of Lent with sincerity and hope. Whether this season feels familiar or new, whether it arrives in a time of personal peace or personal struggle, God meets us right where we are. Lent is not about achieving spiritual perfection. It is about opening ourselves to the transforming love of Christ, who walks with us through every wilderness and leads us toward new life.

May this February be a month of honest reflection, renewed commitment, and quiet hope for our church family. As we begin our Lenten journey together, may we discover again the God who meets us in our weakness, walks with us in our searching, and leads us toward the promise of resurrection.

Communion Servers

Hgdt wct { '3uv

Mcj {"J "/ "Ugv"Wr 'F cxg"
J ctxg{ "/"Ugtxgt"
Mcj nggp'Lqtf cp"/"Ugtxgr

April 2nd (Maundy)

Buck Ivey- Set Up
Kathy Harrah - Server
Jack Rogers - Server

March 1st

Wanda Bowman - Set Up
Jennifer Burgess - Server
Buck Ivey - Server

April 5th (Easter)

Jennifer Burgess - Set Up
Kristi Sutphin - Server
Valerie Wade - Server

Liturgists

February 1st Kathleen Jordan
February 8th Buck Ivey
February 15th Kathryn Maddy
February 22nd Dave Harvey

March 1st Kristi Sutphin
March 8th Valerie Wade
March 15th Buck Ivey
March 22nd Kathryn Maddy
March 29th Adam Greathouse

In Care Facilities:

Ann McCormick, Apt.106, English Meadows, 5 Bexley Dr, Scott Depot, WV 25560
Sadie Ashworth, 5 Rolling Meadows Dr., Room 118, Scott Depot, WV 25560

Military

Captain Allie Curtis, US. Army (United States)
Hunter Parsons, U.S. Navy (Virginia)
Mickey Swartz, Aircrew Flight Equipment Technician, U.S. Air Force (Eugene, Oregon)
Lieutenant Jack Wiles, U.S. Air Force
PFC Joseph Sutphin, US Army
Master Sergeant Robert Maddy (Deployed)

Prayer Concerns - Family and Friends

Ashley Nestman, Lymphoma (Connie Ivey)

Victoria Reynolds (Wanda Bowman)

Flo Rogers (Jack's wife & Raven's mom) health complications

Jason Haught, complications from spinal surgery (Vickie Haught's son, Jack Rogers' nephew)

Brett and Linda Foster, glioblastoma (Laurie's nephew and his
Kate Lichtenfels & Family, passed away from cancer (Kathryn Maddy's niece)

Jason Turley, major health concerns (Laurie's son and Holly's brother)

Matt Waldie, lung cancer (Kathleen Jordan's friend)

Mark Cunningham, brain cancer (Abbie Burch's brother)

Mary Jo Swartz, health problems(Kathi Curtis)

Annette Burns, liver issues (Ann McCormick)

Sharon Peterson's parents, Decision-making for long term care

Angie Saunders, pancreatic cancer (Raven's Cousin)

The Family of Cel Jones, loss of Cel

Willie Williams & Millie Astin, ICU in Atlanta (Kathryn Weed)

Cindy Lucas, ovarian cancer (Tony & Alex Dayfield)

Prayer Concerns Congregation Members:

Mark Curtis	Mike Harshbarger
Kensie McComas	John Jones
Ellie Malcomb	Alex Dayfield
Carolyn Reed	Mike Merguc
Journey Combs	Regina Dayfield & Mike
Kathryn Maddy & Family	Dillon
	Braxton Hoyleman

Highlights of January Stated Session Minutes

- Income and Expense statement and Balance sheet were approved.
- 2026 Budget was approved.
- Approved a memorial service for Denny Dillon on January 31st. (Date has been changed to Saturday, February 7)
- Approved a Celebration of Life for Cel Jones on Sunday, February 15.
- Approved hosting a SAMA Lenten Lunch on Wednesday, March 11, 2026
- Approved nominating the officers for the Class of 2028. Elders: Adam Greathouse, David Harvey, Buck Ivey. Trustee for the Class of 2028 Buck Ivey
- Approved receiving a Love Offering for Staff Christmas gift
- Next meeting with Teays Valley Presbyterian Church February 3, 6:00 pm at Teays Valley
- Next Stated Session meeting Tuesday, February 17 at 6:00 pm.
- Next presbytery meeting Saturday-February 21, 2026, Village Chapel in Charleston

Facilities & Worship Committee

Facility and Worship Committee

1/6/2026

6:00PM

Present: Mike Merguc, Michael Clark, David Harvey, Andi Pease, Jack Rogers, Andrey Reyes, Sara Kell

Discussion:

- Update on PNC with Teays Valley
- Approved carpet cleaning in Nursery. (Add to next year budget)
- Approved defibrillator for Nursery, Andrew offered possible grant for the services.
- Fellowship roof leak repaired/tile replaced
- Next meeting 2/10/26 discussion on worship committee duties with Jessica Combs

Littles Story Time Team

by Donna Merguc, Coordinator

Littles continues to be a blessing. Kathy Weed said in her sermon I believe to be “blessed” is to be honored and we certainly are honored to be with these little ones and their families each week.

It's always so nice to hear from past families who have attended Littles. Just this week we heard from Traletta, Van's grandmother. Van just celebrated his sixth birthday and enjoying school. Traletta always sends pics too...it warms our hearts.

Allison Persinger, mother of Norman and Walter, gave us a big box of chips. These were donated from our neighborhood IGA grocery store here in St. Albans. Thank you, thank you. Ellen, their grandmother said, “Donna, Norma loves to be read to. One day he brought me a book and out fell the “Hands Go Up” song which we sing every week. Norman ask his grandmother “let's do this grandma”. She said he just loves Littles and looks forward to it each week.

We welcomed Austin Hilbert to Littles this month. She'll be two years old in March. The family lives in St. Albans. We also welcomed Lenora Tucker, a 21-month old little girl who lives in St. Albans. Everleigh, a two-year old has been coming with her grandmother and she is Donna's neighbor. She loves playing with all the toys. Gabriel, Easton and Piper, are the youngest siblings of our Littles. We watch them sleeping in their car seats, then before you know it they are sitting in their chairs to hear the stories, eating their snacks and making their craft. It's very enjoyable to watch them grow and participate.

We are planning a Valentine party on Friday February 13th. We will Share the Love! Come and join us for a lovable time together!



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to:
nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,
support the mission of the church worldwide, work for justice and peace, and build an inclusive, caring
community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of
God's kingdom.

Women's Lunch Gathering

Women of the church are invited to gather at 11:45am for lunch and fellowship Friday, February 20(weather permitting) at Shuckers on Olde Main. Please RSVP if you can join us by calling Kathryn at (304)539-2573. Everyone is welcome!

Circle Bible Study

Our circle Bible studies are scheduled for Tuesday, February 10 at 7:00 pm on Zoom, and in person on Wednesday, February 11 at noon in the church fellowship hall.

We are on lesson six of our Horizons Bible study for 2025-2026, Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Christ, by the Rev. Dr. Rhashelle D. Hunter. This chapter from Philippians encourages us to rejoice in the Lord always. Join us in discovering the pleasure of daily practicing rejoicing in God. All are welcome!

Daytime Bible study meets Wednesday, February 11 at 12:00 noon in person for table fellowship. Bring your own brown bag lunch. At 12:35 pm we begin the Bible study and conclude promptly at 1:30 pm.

Evening Zoom Bible study meets on Tuesday, February 10 at 7:00 pm. The zoom will open at 6:45 for early birds to fellowship.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85861031680?pwd=Nw4SR3CIr969qxLdwY9avWaru3wiai.1>

Meeting ID: 858 6103 1680

Passcode: 406332

FESTIVAL OF FAITH

"Tell Me A Story"

Keynote: The Widow's Mite and the Widower's Might: Seeing Scripture in Ordinary Actions

Keynote Presenter: Bil Lepp, storyteller, author, and recording artist

Saturday, March 21 9:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Charleston

Pre-registration is \$20 and the deadline is March 2. Links to registration forms, lunch orders, and workshops are on the presbytery's website.

<https://wvpresbytery.org/festival-of-faith/>

Ash Wednesday SERVICE

"Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return"

18 FEBRUARY, 2026

Dinner

5:45

Service

7:00

201 Kanawha Terrace
304-727-2241

Upcoming *Events*

Sunday
February

1st

Annual Congregational Meeting

11:15

Saturday
February

7th

Memorial for Denny Dillon

11:00

Sunday
February

8th

Souper Bowl

11:15

Sunday
February

15th

Memorial for Cel Jones

11:15

Wednesday
February

18th

Ash Wednesday Dinner & Service

5:45 & 7:00

First Presbyterian Church
201 Kanawha Terrace
St. Albans, WV 25177

Anyone desiring to have articles,
information, or announcements
included in the February Presby
Record will need to submit that
information by January 28th.
Thank you.

Trustees

Class of 2025: Buck Ivey
Class of 2026: Holly Greathouse
Class of 2027: Dewitt Bowman

Officers

Class of 2025

Dave Harvey (1)
Adam Greathouse (1)
Buck Ivey (1)

Class of 2026

Kathleen Jordan (2)
Valerie Wade (2)
Kristi Sutphin (1)

Class of 2027

Jennifer Burgess (1)
Kathy Harrah (1)
Jack Rogers (2)

Church Staff

Ministers.....	Every Member of the Congregation
Pastor	
Administrative Assistant.....	Raven Lanham
Custodian	Jennifer Gil & Mike Merguc
Musician.....	N. David Stern
Treasurer	Buck Ivey
Tech Team	Dave&Wendy Harvey, Betty King, Logan Roberts

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