

**First United Methodist Church of Freehold
Bulletin**

**Sunday, February 18, 2026
Ash Wednesday**

11:30 A.M. / 7:00 P.M.

Prelude:

Yoonjung Park (11:30 A.M.)
Mitch Samu (7:00 P.M.)

***Call to Worship:**

Leader: We are but dust, destined to return to dust, fragile and powerless.

People: Forgive us for our pride and indifference.

Leader: We repent of the times we have forgotten your love.

People: Forgive us for listening to the noise of the world and turning away from your voice.

**All: We return to you, O Lord. With torn hearts and contrite spirits, we bow before you.
Renew us by your grace. Amen.**

(A moment of silent prayer)

Leader: The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. The Lord will never turn away those who truly repent. So, in the name of Jesus Christ, I declare to you: You are forgiven. The grace of the Lord is here, among us, even now.

People: May the peace of Christ rest upon every heart that turns to him. Amen.

(A Moment of Silent Prayer)

***Opening Hymn:**

“Hymn of Promise”

UMH #707

***Opening Prayer: (In Unison)**

O God, Maker of everything and judge of all that you have made, from the dust of the earth you have formed us, and from the dust of death you raise us up. By the redemptive power of the cross, create in us clean hearts and put within us a new spirit, that we may repent of our sins and lead lives worthy of your calling, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***The Lord’s Prayer:**

UMH #895

Scripture Reading:

Joel 2:12–17; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

Sermon:

“A Life That Blooms from Ashes”

Rev. Yoseb Jeon

***Hymn:**

“Change My Heart, O God”

TFWS #2152

**Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline
Thanksgiving Over the Ashes
*Imposition of Ashes**

***Prayer of Confession and Pardon:**

Pastor: O, God, when we pause to look back at our lives on this Ash Wednesday, we realize that we have been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

People: We have neglected to do good when it was in our power to do so.

Pastor: We, like believers of old, have pulled down your altars and erected idols crafted in our own image.

People: We have turned our backs on the poor, choosing instead to criminalize poverty.

Pastor: We have ignored the cries of the motherless, the fatherless, the widow and the widower and chose instead to turn children and the elderly into the new poor.

People: We have bankrupted the country with our greed and consumed more than our share of the world's riches.

Pastor: We have not dealt honorably with our enemies or our friends, and we have feigned a place in the company of the righteous.

People: Forgive us, O God, for turning sackcloth and ashes into a fashion statement by pursuing form without substance.

Pastor: Forgive us, O God, for the times we have neglected to provide our children and our world an authentic example of Christianity.

All: As we begin the journey of these 40 days, Wash us, O God and we shall be clean. Cleanse us, O Lord, and we shall be made whole. Amen.

*Moment of Silent Confession

* Unison Prayer

May the Almighty and merciful God, who desires not the death of a sinner but that we turn from wickedness, accept our repentance, forgive our sins, and restore us by the Holy Spirit to newness of life. Amen.

*Closing Hymn:

“What Wondrous Love Is This”

UMH #292

*Benediction:

Rev Yoseb Jeon

*Postlude:

Yoonjung Park (11:30 A.M.)

Mitch Samu (7:00 P.M.)

Joel 2:12-17

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?' "

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Visit of the Magi

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east^[b] and have come to pay him homage.” ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah^[c] was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd^[d] my people Israel.’ ”

The Massacre of the Infants

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi,^[a] he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi.^[b] ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

The Return from Egypt

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” ²¹ Then Joseph^[c] got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.