



Bookwalter United Methodist Church

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March 2026

Bailey Hueser, Choir Director
Todd Spangler, Pianist

Reverend Stephen K. Doyal, Pastor
Betsy Payne, Secretary

Edie Jo Hall, Children's Director
Taylor Stephens, Youth Director

*Sharing God's love with our neighbors,
inviting them to share in the joy of Jesus Christ.*

ARTICLE

I used this essay by Rev. Heidi Heath for Ash Wednesday and wanted to share some of it with the rest of you. Steve

Death can be terrifying. We're bad at talking about it as a culture. We're not even good at talking about it as a church. It can feel utterly terrifying. But I have news for us all. We are all going to die. I know it's not considered a thing you talk about in polite company, but there it is.

Today is Ash Wednesday. It is the beginning of Lent and the day in the church calendar that we are called upon to face our own mortality. I confess it is one of my favorite days of the church year. It is the day that we are called upon to face the deep truth that as mortals we are dust, and to dust we shall return. This beautiful, wild, precious we are living right now shall not always be.

It can be scary, but I find it a little bit refreshing. After all, we live in a culture that tells us if we work hard enough, have enough money, buy enough skin care products, eat healthy enough, or exercise with enough vigor, we might just live forever. And yet, we know that is not true. So today, we proclaim the truth that we shall return to the dust over which God first breathed life.

And I breathe a sigh of relief. Because admitting and facing my own mortality, allows me to admit that God is God and I am not. It allows me to lay down my attempts to manage my own human brokenness, and step into the deep and holy mystery that is the Christian life. Having confessed my sins, and admitted my own mortality, it allows me to live freely this incredible, mortal life that is my reality right now.

Ash Wednesday reminds us that in spite of it all, death does not have the last word. While we and others have the power to destroy our mortal flesh, God has destroyed death. The beauty of Ash Wednesday is that it cuts through the crap. It gets to the heart of everything. It reminds us of God's infinite promises. It reminds us there is beauty in our brokenness, and freedom that we don't have to live up to some earthly falsehood about perfection.

So, shout it from the roof tops, sing it in your heart, whisper it quietly to yourself, but tell that truth – "O mortal, you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Thanks be to God indeed.

BRAINSTORMING SESSION

As we have done for several years, we will meet with the sole purpose of coming up with creative ways for our church to be in mission and ministry to our community. We will gather Saturday morning March 7 at 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel Classroom. Everyone is welcome and no idea is too crazy.



CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Our next meeting will be Monday evening, March 9 at 7:00 PM in the Chapel Classroom at the church. We will also offer an online Zoom option.

RUMMAGE SALE

We are gathering items for the Rummage Sale planned for May 28-30. You can put donations in the room across from the Ladies Room until we determine another location.

COFFEE HOUSE CHURCH

We will have our next CHC on Palm Sunday, March 29th where we will worship in the Fellowship Hall. Guest speaker to be determined. We will have light breakfast items such as donuts and of course, Coffee.



Mental Health First Aid

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Scott Payne is making plans to lead a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training here at Bookwalter. MHFA is resilience training designed to help people understand mental health and substance use challenges and respond in supportive ways. The training is designed and administered by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

Here is a description from the MHFA website: "This evidence-based, early-intervention course, administered by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, is available virtually and in-person and uses community-specific scenarios, activities and videos to teach the skills needed to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges as well as how to provide initial support until they are connected with appropriate professional help."

Scott offers the in-person version, which will be held Friday, March 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (*Though he says we will likely finish early*). There is no charge since he has received a grant for the materials. There may be a small fee for lunch if we have it catered. Let Scott know if you are interested.

BOOKWALTER DEVOTIONAL BOOKS

Thank you for your continued patience as we finish this project and make it available to everyone.