

Readings for  
Ash Wednesday 18th February 2026

First Reading

Isaiah 58.1-12

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 58,  
beginning at verse 1. Let us listen for the word of the Lord.

Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their  
rebellion,

to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet day after day they seek me

and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that  
practised righteousness

and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of  
me righteous judgements,

they delight to draw near to God.

‘Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?’ Look, you  
serve your own interest on your fast-day,  
and oppress all your workers.

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight

and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today  
will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose,

a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a  
bulrush,

and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast,  
a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,

to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free,

and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with  
the hungry,

and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see  
the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?  
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall  
go before you,  
the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. Then you shall  
call, and the Lord will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you  
remove the yoke from among you,  
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your  
food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise  
in the darkness  
and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you  
continually,  
and satisfy your needs in parched places,  
and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered  
garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you  
shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to live in.

For the word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

## Second Reading

### 2 Corinthians 5.20b-6.10

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 5, beginning at verse 20b. Let us listen for the word of the Lord.

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you,

and on a day of salvation I have helped you. 'See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry,

but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,

beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger;

by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love,

truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;

in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute.

We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;  
as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see-  
we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed;  
as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making  
many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing  
everything.

For the word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.