

REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

An Evangelical Presbyterian Church
<https://www.rpcerie.org>

The Beginning of Lent Ash Wednesday Service

March 5, 2025

Worship Theme: *“As the Season of Lent begins, we confront our spiritual health at the foot of the cross.”*

We welcome children of all ages in our Worship Service. At the Information Center in the rear of the Sanctuary, we offer children a “Book Bucket” with books and activities for their use. Parents, please do not be concerned if your young child cries. We believe that the cries of young children signal that the church is alive, well, and destined to continue for generations to come.

Welcome and Introduction..... Thomas Brooks

Prelude: *Chief of Sinners*..... arr. Carter

Chief of sinners though I be, Christ is all in all to me.
All my wants to Him are known, all my sorrows are His own.
He sustains the hidden life safe with Him from earthly strife.

O my Savior, help afford by your Spirit and your Word!
When my wayward heart would stray, keep me in the narrow way;
Grace in time of need supply while I live and when I die.

Note: The Congregation should please remain seated for the reading of Scripture.

Old Testament Reading: Jonah 3:1-6Marykay Stahl

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

Call to Worship: *(responsively)* Thomas Brooks

Liturgist: We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

(...continued over...)

Congregation: God made him who had no sin to be sin, for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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

Congregation: “In the time of my favor I heard you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.” See, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

—2 Corinthians 5:20 - 6:2

Note: If able, the Congregation should please stand for the hymn.

***Hymn No. 251: Beneath the Cross of Jesus..... ST. CHRISTOPHER**

Note: The Congregation should please be seated.

Prayers of Confession: Psalm 51..... Thomas Brooks
(Responsive Reading: page 804 in the Trinity Hymnal)

Note: The Congregation should please silently confess their sins.

Assurance of Pardon (responsively)..... Thomas Brooks

Liturgist: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Congregation: For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned.

—John 3:16-18a

Thanks be to God!

Note: If able, the Congregation should please stand for the reading of the Gospel.

(...continued over...)

***Gospel Reading:** Matthew 11:20-24.....Marykay Stahl

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

Note: The Congregation should please be seated.

Meditation: “Ashes to Ashes” Robert LeSuer

Meditation Text: Genesis 3:1-13, 16-19

Imposition of AshesAmy Stearns

The Congregation should please stand and, using the center aisle, row by row move to the front of the sanctuary to receive the imposition of ashes.

Then, using the side aisles, please return to your seats after the imposition.

Once the Congregation returns to your seats, please spend a few moments, in quiet meditation, considering the significance of the Season of Lent and the ultimate sacrifice of our Savior’s suffering, death, and resurrection.

Then, please quietly leave the sanctuary, as a symbol of the beginning of the blessed Season of Lent.

Postlude: *O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee*arr. Dillon

** Congregation please stand, if you are able to do so.*

The Season of Lent and the Imposition of Ashes

The Season of Lent is a time when, through the study of Scripture and through prayer, many believers experience a time of accelerated spiritual growth.

By focusing on Jesus and what He means to those of us who belong to Him, the Season of Lent gives us a unique opportunity to draw closer to the God who loves us with His everlasting love. The Season of Lent also gives us an opportunity to experience, afresh and anew, the glories of God’s mercy and grace, through the shed blood of Jesus, which cleanses us from sin.

(...continued over...)

During the Ash Wednesday Service, believers receive the imposition of ashes on their foreheads in the mark of a cross. These ashes are formed by burning the palm branches that were symbolically spread before Jesus on Palm Sunday the year before.

The imposition of ashes serves as a symbol to remind us of the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It reminds us of the sorrow we should feel for the sins we commit and how we must obediently follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, as He helps us to become more like Jesus. And, it reminds us that we all will one day die and our earthly bodies will be returned to the ashes from which God created the first human being, Adam.

During the Season of Lent, we are given the opportunity to focus our daily attention on the *examination* of our personal spiritual condition. Such an examination will properly lead us to a *comparison* of where we are in our walk with God and where we should be, as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Once we engage in this *examination* and *comparison*, we will very likely find ourselves seeking *repentance* for our failings as sin-bent human beings. And, such *repentance* will then lead us to a *consecration* of our lives, in order to devote ourselves to becoming more and more like Jesus.

In Jesus, our failure is overcome by God’s glory. God comes to us, in His mercy, grace, and unfailing love, to make up the distance our sin has put between God and us. As we embark on our journey through this Season of Lent, may we do so knowing that, at the foot of the cross, we find the way of God’s love for us, and that His love is stronger than everything.

Pastor: Rev. Benjamin D. Giffone, PhD
Minister of Music and Worship: Thomas Brooks
Accompanist: Shirley Wilson

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