

Ash Wednesday

The Lenten season is a time for contemplation, and spiritual transformation. It is an intentional journey, wherein we make the time to listen to our lives and listen for the voice of the Spirit leading us towards change and growth.

March 5, 2025

“The Dream is to remember who we are and what matters most to us in the midst of chaos and conflict, to hold ourselves to a higher standard of engagement than the culture in which we live, and to love in ways that mystify our neighbors on the chance it will do a little good.” Barbara Brown Taylor

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Prelude

Evan O'Donovan

Welcome

Reverend Ed Hoener

Opening Prayer:

God of grace, you welcome us with unconditional love and grace. **You're right beside us in our lives as they really are, and in everything that really matters.** Jesus, you're right beside us, to help us see and hear your ways of life; so that we may change and grow, as your disciples. **You lead us into the fullness of life.** Divine Spirit, in this Lenten season may we seek, and welcome your transforming presence! **May we experience stronger faith, greater courage, and deeper peace from having walked this Lenten journey.**

***Opening Hymn #702**

Christ Be Beside Me

Prayer for Letting Go and Healing:

O God, we come to you, because we need your reassurance. We see violence and hatred. We see people getting sick. There is so much happening all around us, our souls are weighed down with worry and fears. **We come because you are our refuge and our strength. You are always present with us in troubles.** God, we come to you because our souls are heavily burdened. We've made mistakes. We've done things that we wish we hadn't. We try to move on, on our own, but we need relief – the relief only you can give. **We come because we know that you are merciful and gracious, and your love is steadfast. We know that you remove our burdens from us, as far as east is from west.** God, we come because our deepest desire is to live in the center of your will. We come because sometimes we don't know which way to go. We come because we want to learn how to listen, and how to align our lives with the winds of the Spirit. **We come because we know that Jesus invites us to come with every burden, and can give us rest and peace as we learn from him. We come because we believe that the Spirit can help us to perceive everything that God is doing so that we can join in.**

Covering Our Burdens in God's Promises:

In silent prayer, reflect on each of the petitions above. Take time to name whatever comes to mind, then let the stone in your hand represent them. Then if you wish, come forward and place the stones in the bowl at the front of the church.

Assurance of God's Grace (Unison):

God of mercy and amazing grace, You are the giver of each new day with the capacity for living in new ways. You heal whatever is broken, in our souls and lives. Teach us how to understand this faith in ever deeper ways. Help us to leave behind everything that overwhelms joy, and charity, and dedication to You. From this moment forward, be the center of all that we are and do, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Ministry of Music

Evan O'Donovan

Scripture Reading

Isa. 58:1-11

Meditation

Pastor Ed

Hymn of Response #314 *Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness

Call to Renewal and Restoration

Consecrating the Elements:

O God, Maker of heaven and earth, we come to you ready and receptive to the blessing you alone can give. **We come to receive the grace that is provided for us through these elements we have chosen.** We pray for your Spirit now, to set apart these earthly elements so that they will confer upon us the restoration of soul, and empowerment of Spirit you long for us to know. **Bless each of us, wherever we may be, and make us receptive to the working of your Spirit, God's steadfast love, and the ministry of Christ for us and our salvation. Amen.**

Congregational Response:

(People will anoint themselves with the elements of their choice, or receive the elements from the pastor, and Worship Leader.)

Imposition of Ashes:

After receiving the sign of the cross, say: **"I am marked as Christ's own, now and forever."**

Imposition of Baptismal Waters:

After receiving the sign of the cross, say: **"I am marked as Christ's own, now and forever."**

***Closing Hymn #775**

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

Blessing

Postlude

Evan O'Donovan



Thank you to Cheryl Anne Cammann & Susan Krivenko for running the projector & camera!

**The First Presbyterian Church of Rahway
1731 Church Street**

March 5, 2025
Rev. Ed Hoener
William Siocha
Carol Ann Bregman
Evan O'Donovan

7:30 P.M.
Pastor
Worship Leader
Administrator
Music Director