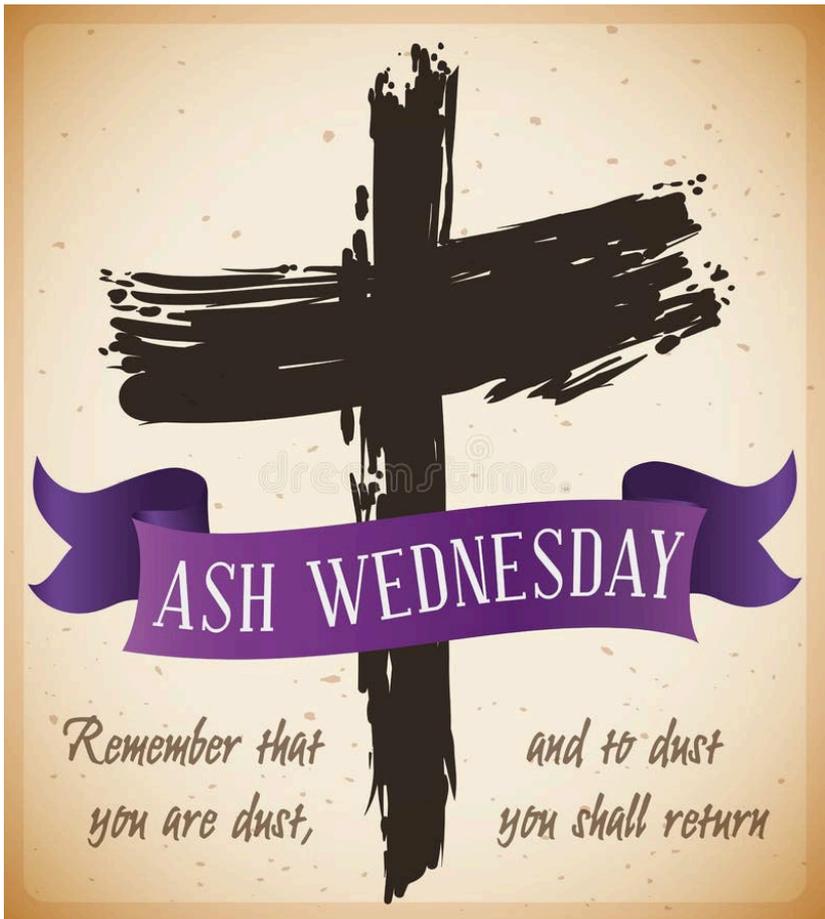


# Ash Wednesday Service

18 February 2026

Ash Wednesday

First Reformed UCC  
Stone Table Church  
St. John's Evangelical Church



## The Occasion

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, a season of prayer, fasting, and repentance leading up to Easter. The day is marked by the imposition of ashes on the foreheads of participants, symbolizing mortality and the need for repentance. The service typically includes a solemn atmosphere. It serves as a communal act of confession and contrition, inviting the congregation to reflect on their mortality and the need for God's mercy. The ashes are a reminder of our temporary existence and the reality that we all face death. It is also a time to commit to a renewed life of purpose and to commit to serve God by ministering to Him and His children in this world.



The Greeting

Pastor Randall

Opening Remarks/Announcements

Scripture for Meditation      **Daniel 9:3**

Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking Him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

Prelude

*A Trusting Heart*

Carleton

Call to Worship      **Isaiah 58:1, 6-7, 11-12**

L: "Cry aloud; do not hold back;

**C: lift up your voice like a trumpet;**

L: declare to My people their transgression,

**C: to the house of Jacob their sins.**

L: Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of wickedness,

**C: to undo the straps of the yoke,**

L: to let the oppressed go free,

**C: and to break every yoke?**

L: Is it not to share your bread with the hungry

**C: and bring the homeless poor into your house;**

L: when you see the naked, to cover him,

**C: and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?**

L: And the Lord will guide you continually

**C: and satisfy your desire in scorched places**

L: and make your bones strong;

**C: and you shall be like a watered garden,**

L: like a spring of water,

**C: whose waters do not fail.**

L: And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
**C: you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;**  
L: you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
**C: the restorer of streets to dwell in.”**

### Greeting

Ash Wednesday is the start of our journey to Easter. Here, we confess our sin and our need of a Savior. Here, we come in our humility and brokenness seeking to be restored and led by the Holy Spirit.

### Scripture

#### **Psalm 23**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. <sup>3</sup> He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

### Meditation

#### **Yea, Though I Walk Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death**

### Call to Confession

#### **Joel 2:12**

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;”

### Prayer of Confession

#### **Joel 2:13**

**We come before You, O Lord, rending our hearts and not our garments. We do not want this to be a show. You alone are gracious and merciful. You are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Relent from the disaster our sin deserves. Give us each a new heart and a right spirit to follow in the footsteps of our Savior. Hear us from the depths of our contrite hearts.**

## Silent Prayer of Confession

### Assurance of Pardon

**Joel 2:14**

We trust that the Lord will turn and relent from the wrath our sin deserves. He is more gracious than we are to confess. He leaves a blessing behind Him in His Son crushed upon the Tree for our sakes. Therefore, we will receive a sign of our contrition and demonstrate we desire a new life in Him.

### Blessing of the Ashes

— from “An Order of Worship for Ash Wednesday,”  
Reformed Church Press,  
475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY, 10115, USA

Almighty God, You have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence and a reminder that only by Your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen  
You are invited to come forward as we sing...

### Imposition of Ashes

*[As you receive the ashes, you will hear: “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return, but the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever”.]*

### Hymn #260

***Just As I Am, without One Plea***

### Prayer for Illumination

Pastor Mike

Gracious and Holy God,

As we enter this sacred season of reflection and repentance, we ask that Your Spirit move among us. Prepare our hearts to receive Your Word with humility and openness. Silence every voice but Your own, that we may hear Your truth clearly and respond with faithful obedience.

Let the light of Your grace shine upon the Scriptures we read today, illuminating their meaning and guiding us to live as Your redeemed people. May Your Word transform us, leading us to walk in the way of Christ, who calls us to repentance, renewal, and hope. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Scripture

## Psalm 24

<sup>1</sup> The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, <sup>2</sup> for He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. <sup>3</sup> Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in His holy place? <sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. <sup>5</sup> He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. <sup>6</sup> Such is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.- Selah

<sup>7</sup> Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. <sup>8</sup> Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! <sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. <sup>10</sup> Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory! Selah

## Sermon

## Who Has Clean Hands and a Pure Heart?

## Communion

## \*Apostles' Creed

## Scripture

## I Corinthians 11:23-32

<sup>23</sup>For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup>and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." <sup>25</sup>In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." <sup>26</sup>For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

<sup>27</sup>Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup>Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup>For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup>That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. <sup>31</sup>But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup>But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

Consecration of the Bread and Cup

Receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ

Hymn #149

*Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Anointing for the Journey**

John Wesly Korani

Scripture

**Psalm 25**

<sup>1</sup> To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. <sup>2</sup> O my God, in You I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. <sup>3</sup> Indeed, none who wait for You shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. <sup>4</sup> Make me to know Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. <sup>5</sup> Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day long. <sup>6</sup> Remember Your mercy, O LORD, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. <sup>7</sup> Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of Your goodness, O LORD! <sup>8</sup> Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. <sup>9</sup> He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble His way. <sup>10</sup> All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. <sup>11</sup> For Your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great. <sup>12</sup> Who is the man who fears the LORD? Him will He instruct in the way that he should choose. <sup>13</sup> His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land. <sup>14</sup> The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He makes known to them His covenant. <sup>15</sup> My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for He will pluck my feet out of the net. <sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. <sup>17</sup> The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. <sup>18</sup> Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. <sup>19</sup> Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. <sup>20</sup> Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in You. <sup>21</sup> May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You. <sup>22</sup> Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

## Blessing the Oil

We consecrate this oil, O God, in Your name, asking that through it Your people may be reminded that they are sealed in Your heart, they are comforted by Your healing power, and they have been set aside to be Your holy people, Your ministers in this broken world. Encourage and strengthen them by Your Spirit to do Your will on earth as it is in heaven. Amen

## The Anointing

[As you come forward, we will ask, "What would you have us pray?" Then, we will simply apply oil to the forehead or hand after which time you may return to your seat.]

## Song

*O Praise The Name (Anástasis)*

Hillsong Worship

## Benediction

from the **51<sup>st</sup> Psalm, v 17**

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, the Lord our God will not despise.  
Thanks be to God! Go in peace. Amen.

## Postlude Sharing the Peace

As we leave this day, greet those around you with a sign of peace (handshakes or hugs) and words like "The peace of the Lord be with you."

## Postlude

*Because He Lives*

Bock

Offerings may be placed in the baskets on the stands in the back of the sanctuary. Designated offerings will go where directed. Undesignated gifts will go to minister as Jesus instructed in **Matthew 25:31-46**—to “the least of these My brothers and sisters.”



## HOW SHALL WE RESPOND THIS WEEK?

**Fasting**—Read **Isaiah 58**. Where do you find yourself in this passage? What might a true fast look like for you or your household?

**Prayer**—Pray that the Spirit might reveal your heart and help you discern God’s call on your life to be a minister of Christ’s. What does it mean to truly fast and be “all in” for God?

**Around the Kitchen Table**—During Lent, designate a chair at your kitchen table or in the living room as a “Christ chair,” a symbol of Christ’s presence in your midst. Consider how you might show to others that you are a laborer of Christ’s without saying anything.

**Ideas for Including Children and Teens**—If you decide to set aside a “Christ chair,” encourage your children to think of ways to decorate the chair so it further represents Christ’s presence in your midst. For Ash Wednesday, consider using black crepe paper or construction paper to make a cross on the chair. This marks the chair as “Christ’s chair,” which reminds us that we are called to repentance while pointing ahead to the end of the Lenten journey.

We are pleased to have

First Reformed United Church of Christ, Kenton  
Pastor Mike Darling

Stone Table Church, Kenton  
John Wesly Korani

St. John’s Evangelical Church, Kenton  
Rev. Dr. Randall J. Forester