The words "Lent" or days like "Ash Wednesday' can invoke a number of thoughts, questions and feelings, depending on your background with the Church. If you grew up in an evangelical church, you probably think of it as some strange Catholic tradition, where folks put ashes on their foreheads and give up different kinds of foods every year. If you grew up in a liturgical tradition, you may have had a good experience or, perhaps, you file it away in the junk drawer of legalism given some bad experiences. Whatever the case, Lent doesn't have to be seen as either rote or mystifying. Like the rest of the seasons, it can be seen rightly and faithfully when understood through the lens of Jesus—the one true story of the Bible.

Lent starts with Ash Wednesday, a day to remember our mortality and the idea that we are but dust and to dust we shall return. In many churches, individuals celebrate Ash Wednesday by placing ash on their foreheads in the shape of a cross, representing entrance into a time of denial, repentance and humility.

Lent is a time for the Church to symbolically follow Christ into the wilderness. It is a time for fasting and self-denial, though not for denial itself. It is a period to empty ourselves of lesser things so that we might be filled with the greater things of the gospel.

When we enter into the story of Jesus, symbolically walking with Him through the desert and to the cross, we move from self-gratification to self-denial. As we embrace the pain and sorrow of Jesus, we turn away from our sin and toward the Savior. Jesus, we turn away from our sin and toward the Savior.



Thank you for joining us today! We'd love to stay in touch, answer your questions, and pray for you. You will find all of the ways to connect with the community at Rogue Valley Fellowship on our website, rvf.church, or by pointing your smartphone camera at the QR code below.





Ash Wednesday

FEBRUARY 14TH 2024

MORTALITY.

Psalm 39:4-6

In a time where our bodies feel fragile, our time feels short, and we are ever aware of our inevitable end; we remember that from dust we came and to dust we will return.

We feel it now more than ever, O Lord. Unrest and uncertainty reveal to us that we are not sovereign, but you are sovereign. Our bodies groan with sickness and fear, longing to die so we can be reborn.

Who will deliver us from this body of death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Though our bodies are perishable, they will be raised imperishable. Though we are sown in weakness, we will be resurrected by the power of the Spirit.

Holy Father, may the knowledge of our mortality not terrify us. Instead, may this unveiling relieve us to remember that we depend on You. Though our bodies will expire, help us fix our eyes on what is unseen. We are at your mercy, O God. Thank you for the opportunity to remember our humanity.

In suffering, pain, loss, and death, strengthen our faith to do its work and through the Spirit bring us to completeness through the mystery in which Christ has gone before.

We need your help, God, to rejoice in everlasting hope, to persevere through temporary suffering, to be unceasing in prayer.

With faithful trembling, we know that the perishable cannot inherit the imperishable. This is certainly a mystery, but though our bodies die we will not be swallowed up by death. We will all be changed.

AWARENESS OF SIN.

Psalm 51

Gracious God,

Our sins are too heavy to carry,

too real to hide,

and too deep to undo.

Forgive what our lips tremble to name,

what our hearts can no longer bear,

and what has become for us a consuming fire of

judgment.

Set us free from a past we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace

to grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

CONFESSION.

1 JOHN 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

HOPE OF RENEWAL.

Psalm 42

BENEDICTION.

Gracious God,

Out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life,

Creating us to serve you and our neighbors.

In this season of repentance,

Restore to us the joy of our salvation

And strengthen us to face our mortality,

That we may reach with confidence for your mercy, In Jesus Christ, our Lord,

Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

One God, now and forever. Amen



JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GO MERCY ON ME, A SINNER	
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