

*Covenant Congregational Church*  
*Ash Wednesday*

Worship Service      February 18, 2026      7:00 p.m.  
Prelude      Give Me Jesus – arr. Mark Hayes

**\*Call to Worship**

Return to the Lord.  
Leave behind all the pain.  
Leave behind all the hate.  
Come back to your true life again.

**Return to the Lord.**  
Abandon your sins.  
Abandon your fears.  
Come back to repentance and hope.  
Return to the Lord.  
Discard your old ways.  
Give up your old sorrows.  
We cling to the hope found in Christ.

**\*Invocation**

Almighty and merciful God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent; create in us new and contrite hearts, so that when we turn to you and confess our sins, we may receive your full and perfect forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

**\*Hymn**      *Come, O Sinners, Poor and Needy*      #324

**Scripture Readings**

Old Testament Reading: Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17  
New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 5: 20b-6: 10  
Response:      The Word of the Lord.  
                    Thanks be to God.

**Response**

Cry, and God will answer.  
**Call, and the Lord will say, "I am here."**  
If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word; if you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed.  
**Call, and the Lord will say, "I am here."**  
Your light will rise in the darkness and your shadows become like noon.  
The Lord will always guide you, giving you relief in desert places.  
Cry, and God will answer.  
**Call, and the Lord will say, "I am here."**

**Gospel Reading**

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

Response:      The Word of the Lord.  
                    Thanks be to God.

**Hymn of Preparation**      *Change My Heart, O God*

#372

**Homily**

**Thanksgiving over the Ashes**

**Imposition of the Ashes**      *Just As I Am – arr. Schram*

*When invited, please come forward through the center aisle to receive the ashes, returning to your seats by way of the side aisles.*

**Responsive Psalm Reading:**

Psalm 51, Response 1

#808

**Words of Assurance**

**\*Hymn**      *All My Sins Have Been Forgiven*

#359

**\*Benediction**

Our loving Creator does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their distorted lives and live. Therefore we implore God to grant us true repentance that those things which we do this day may be pleasing to God, that the rest of our lives may be lived faithfully, and that at the last we may come to God's eternal joy, through Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God! Go in peace. Amen.

**Postlude**      *I Need Thee Every Hour – arr. Janet Vogt*

*Please leave in silence at the conclusion of the service.*

\*Please stand as able.

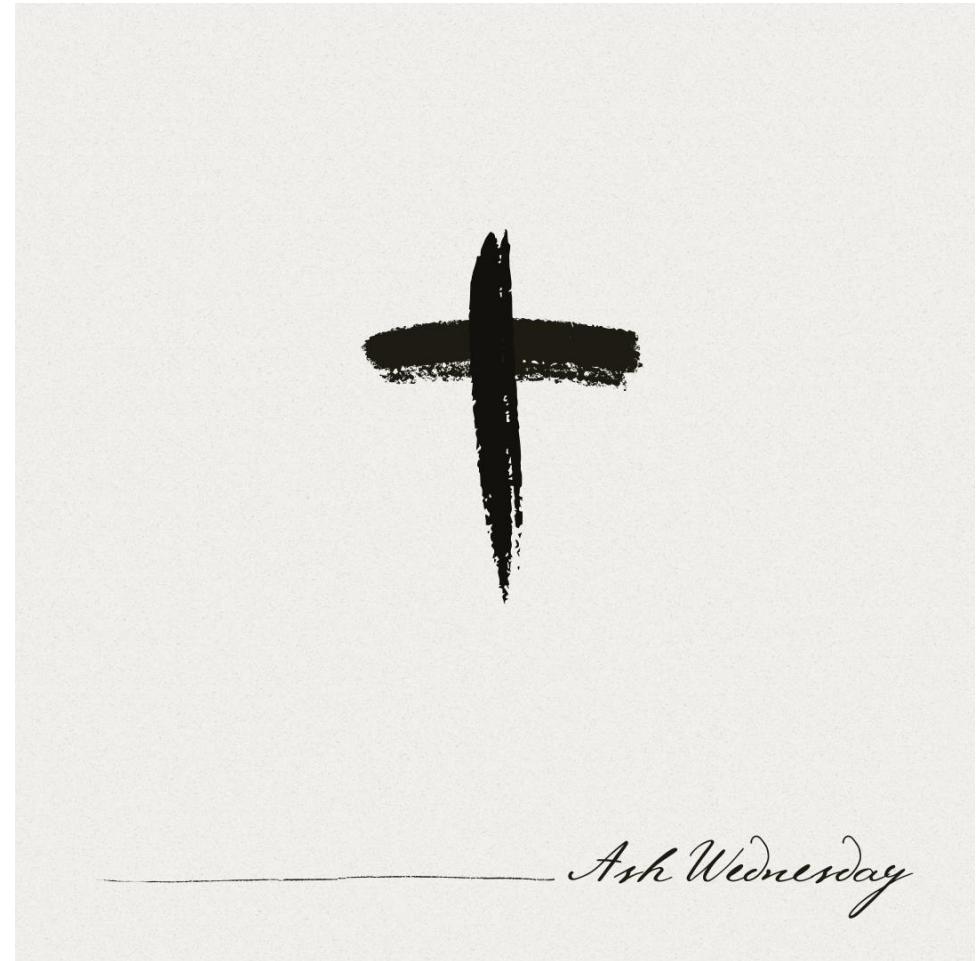
## Worship Participants

Co-Pastors ..... Rev. Dr. Devyn Chambers Johnson and Rev. Ryan Chambers Johnson  
Scripture Reader ..... Beth Abreu  
Piano ..... Beth Buonocore  
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### ASH WEDNESDAY AND THE LENTEN SEASON

Through the centuries, Christians have observed the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection with great devotion. It became the custom of the church to prepare for Easter by a season of penitence, fasting, and prayer. This season of forty days provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for baptism into the body of Christ. It has also been the time when persons who had committed serious sins and had been separated from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the church. The whole congregation is thus reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our baptismal faith.

This evening, all are invited to enter into a holy observation of Lent. Throughout this season, we are called to honestly examine our lives, to be sincerely sorry for our sins, and to wholeheartedly recommit ourselves to God's purpose and direction in our lives. Christians have consistently found over the centuries that prayer, fasting, gifts, and actions of service for others, along with reading and meditating on the Word of God, powerfully nourish our spiritual lives. Tonight, as we begin this season, each of us is challenged to make a commitment to these practices, and to choose one in particular on which to focus, as we seek to grow in Christ.



Welcome to  
**Covenant Congregational Church**

Covenant Congregational Church  
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Pastor Ryan: 508-238-6423 (x2) [pastorryan@ecovchurch.org](mailto:pastorryan@ecovchurch.org)

*Covenant Congregational Church exists to build a welcoming community so that all generations can know God, participate freely, and grow in faith together.*