

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ROYAL OAK

MARCH 5, 2025 | 7PM

Ash Wednesday



*Spirituality | Service | Sharing*

## Welcome to First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak

We hope you sense an authentic community here! This church is *not* for people who have everything about their faith figured out. It's not for people whose lives are neat and tidy. *This is a community gathered in Christ.* Together, we are seeking a world made whole. The Holy Spirit draws us together with our doubts, struggles, *and* our celebrations. God is at work transforming us and showing us glimpses of Christ's light in the world!

Our worship service follows a traditional format. Our prayers and preaching put the Bible in conversation with practical questions to help us live faithfully in our daily lives. Our community is made up of people who bring different experiences and perspectives. Together, we trust in God's grace and love, which are free gifts to us, no matter what life brings our way. We don't need to earn that love, yet we can always rely on it.

If you are seeking to be comforted, challenged, or to grow in your faith, we would be honored to accompany you on that journey. You are welcome here just as you are.

*Rev. Emma Nickel*

Pastor

## Children Belong Here

There is a place for families and children of all ages here! We believe children who worship with their church family stick with their faith for a lifetime. Choose what works best for your family:

- The *Prayground* in the back of the sanctuary, where children may do quiet activities, with you nearby to assist, as they absorb the worship service. Third graders and older are encouraged to sit with their family in the pews.
- The **Backyard Playroom** is a free program offering a safe, indoor environment for children ages five (5) and under to play under parental/guardian supervision, and is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9am to 12pm.
- Sunday School: Following the Time with Children, kids may go with Sunday school leaders to class, which ends at the conclusion of the worship service.
- Nursery: Childcare for infants and toddlers during the 10:30am service, with background-checked staff and volunteers.

## Finding Your Way

*Kirkman Fellowship Hall:* Use either staircase in the lobby to go downstairs into the Hall. *Nursery:* Located to the right of the lobby, down the hallway across from the Sunflowers Preschool classroom. *Elevator:* Down the hall, left past the Sunflowers Preschool classroom. *Restrooms:* Women's & Men's are at the top of the short stairwells in the lobby; All Gender/Single in the narthex outside the sanctuary; Accessible is at the end of the hallway near the Fireside Room. *Hearing-assist devices:* Ushers near the sanctuary doors are available to assist you.

## Interested in Joining?

For those interested in exploring the possibility of membership or learning more about who we are and what we do, new member gatherings take place several times a year. To get connected, contact Rev. Emma Nickel at [enickel@fpcro.org](mailto:enickel@fpcro.org)



## Giving

Giving online is a fast and easy! Click GIVE at [www.fpcro.org](http://www.fpcro.org) to make a one-time gift. Recurring gifts may set up using a debit/credit card, or a PayPal account using the QR code. Cash/checks may be placed in the offering plates by the side aisle doors or in the basket in the narthex entry. Thank you for sharing your gifts with God and the church!

At the ♦ you may stand in body or in spirit. Bold text is read or sung in unison.

## Prelude

“Choral Dorian”

*Choral Dorian*

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## Welcome

### ♦Call to Worship<sup>1</sup>

One: These days of dust. These days of despair.

**All: We can hear reality speak to us in a clear, ringing voice.**

One: So we approach. Carefully.

**All: Barely ready to hear the hard truths we long to be told about beautiful, terrible death.**

One: How strange that it feels so right and good to walk forward together wearing our finitude, a mess of ash smeared on our foreheads, to be told:

**All: ‘remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’**

One: Prepare us, God, for this symbol and these words. Prepare us for your truth: You looked on us, covered in death, as a man about to walk a darkening path,

**All: the only one who could wipe away our ashes with a single act of love.**

### ♦Hymn #381

“Restore in Us, O God”

Text: Carl Daw ©1989 Hope Publishing Co.

## Call to Confession

### Prayer of Confession<sup>2</sup>

**All: Mighty God, you are the one who guides and guards our way. To follow you is to trust you in paradox; that from a broken, aching heart, rises a healing and hopeful heart; that out of weakness and vulnerability, grows the quickening of Christ’s love; that in darkness and despair, the radiance of Christ’s light shines. And so we are not afraid to acknowledge that we fail to follow you. We have sinned in what we have thought and said, in the wrong we have done and in the good we have not done. We have sinned in ignorance; we have sinned in weakness; we have sinned through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry. We repent and turn to you. Forgive us, for our Savior Christ’s sake, and renew our lives to the glory of your name.**

## **Anthem**

“Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God”

*Carl Mueller*

*~Chancel Choir*

*“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Create in me a clean heart, O God!”*

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## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

One: Through the cross of Christ, God has mercy on us, pardons us, and sets us free. Know that we are forgiven and be at peace.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## **Prayer for Illumination<sup>3</sup>**

**All: Holy God, your invitation is simple. With joy in your voice, you invite us to follow. But the noise of this world is distracting, and we are afraid, so we get stuck somewhere between our heads and our hearts. We get stuck between our intentions and our actions. So today, speak to us again. Invite us to follow. Speak once more of good news. Pierce our hearts with your love. Amen.**

## **Scripture Reading**

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10

*Pew Bible, NT pg. 191*

## **Message**

*Rev. Emma Nickel*

## **Silence for Reflection**

## **Ritual of Ashes and Prayer**

*During the anthem, you are invited to come forward to receive the imposition of ashes on your forehead or hand. Please extend your hand if you prefer to receive ashes there.*

**Anthem****“Sign Us with Ashes”***William Rowan**The congregation is encouraged to join in the refrain.*

Sign us with ash - es, mer - ci - ful God,  
chil-dren of dust, as to dust we re-turn. Sign us with ash-es,  
mer-ci-ful God; mark us and make us your own.

The musical score is written on three staves in 6/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics printed below the notes. The first staff contains the first two measures, the second staff contains the next two measures, and the third staff contains the final two measures, ending with a double bar line.

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**Prayer**

**All:** Holy God, from dust we came, to dust we shall return; and even yet, we sing “Alleluia” at the grave because death is not the end, only a sign of an impending resurrection. May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality, a desire for repentance, and a reminder that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Savior. And so, into your loving and merciful ways, Source of Being, we commend our lives. Accomplish in us the work of your saving grace. By the passion of our Savior, Jesus Christ, bring us with all your saints to the joy of Christ’s resurrection. Amen.

**Invitation to Observe the Season of Lent**

## Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen**

### ◇ Hymn #628

“We Cannot Measure How You Heal”

Text: John Bell; Music: Scottish melody; arr. John Bell ©1989 WGRG The Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications)

### ◇ Charge and Benediction

#### Postlude

“Fugue in d minor”

*Bohuslav Cernohorsky*

Public Domain

- 1 Adapted from Kate Bowler, “A Blessing for Ash Wednesday,” in *Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day: Daily Meditations for the Ups, Down, and In-Betweens* (New York: Convergent Books, 2024), 99.
- 2 Adapted from Anne Apple, “Ash Wednesday Order of Worship,” *Presbyterian Outlook*, 2025 and <https://liturgy.co.nz/church-year/ash-wednesday>.
- 3 Adapted from Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](https://sanctifiedart.org).

## **FPCRO STAFF**

*Pastor:* Rev. Emma Nickel

*Dir. of Christian Education:* Joelle Jarrait

*Dir. of Music Ministries/Organist:* Joseph Jackson

*Organ Scholar:* John Etsell

*Chancel Choir Dir.:* Kent Wattleworth

*Sunburst Singers Dir.:* Audrey Frieberg

*Church Admin.:* Kari Peruski

*Facility Manager:* Alan Glasel

*Admin. Assistant:* Sally Gilreath

*Sunday/Evening Reception:* Todd Crawford

*S.T.A.G.E. Youth Ministry Director:* Jessica Gibbs

*Backyard Playroom Coordinator:* Ashleigh McKnight

*Nursery Care Worker:* Abby Pochron

## **SOLOISTS**

Bryan Clinthome, *baritone*

Brady DeVecchio, *tenor*

Olivia Donnel, *soprano*

Audrey Frieberg, *soprano*

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*Our church is a Stephen Ministry church. Stephen Ministers are lay caregivers who are trained to provide high-quality confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting. Contact the pastor if you are in need.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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### **Lenten Devotional**

Pick up a paper copy of the FPCRO Lenten Devotional or download a PDF if you prefer to view it on a device. Many members of the congregation have shared their personal faith experiences as a way to guide us through the season of Lent as we explore topics that include learning, turning, wilderness, journey, struggle, and spiritual practices. We hope you will enjoy this opportunity to both deepen your faith and draw closer to fellow church members.

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### **Mark Your Calendars for Holy Week and Easter Services**

Maundy Thursday, April 17 at 7pm; Good Friday, April 18 at 7pm; Easter Sunday, April 20 at 10:30am (*one service only*)

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### **Lenten Devotional Discussion**

Mark your calendar for **7pm on Tuesday, April 22** for an evening to discuss the Lenten Devotional, after we've had a chance to enjoy all the entries. Come to share about the process of writing your entry. Come to talk about the insights you gained in reading the entries throughout the season.

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