

Lent 2025: Ash Wednesday



Ashes! This ancient dark and gritty sign reminds us of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, acknowledging our need for repentance. God calls us to know the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, the grace of the cross, and the mercy of obedience. You are invited to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and sacrifice, by acts of love, and by reading and meditating on the Word of God.

Prepare your space for Lent. A home altar or prayer space can be on a side table with your Bible and Lenten prayer resources with a chair nearby, on the table where you eat or any convenient place. Use items or images that have spiritual significance: a cross, icon or picture, candles (candles that light with batteries are perfectly fine!) flowers or a plant.

Joining us remotely? On Ash Wednesday (and Sundays as needed) set a place for the Lord's Table, as simple as a napkin or cloth laid with your choice of Bread and Wine (or grape juice) or an elements cup. Add a candle or candles, even flowers. If you have children in the home, they can -should!- help with creating your home church. They can set the table, draw pictures of Jesus, people they will pray for. They can make flowers, offer one another a simple blessing, making the sign of the Cross on a parents' or siblings' forehead. If you haven't done a home blessing, it can be part of beginning Lent – your home is a sacred space!

Preparing the ashes for imposition remotely: Take the packet of consecrated ash and carefully place it in a small bowl or plate. Have a dampened paper towel or napkin handy. Ash can be messy! Lay the devotional open and ready. Add a little olive oil on the edge of the ashes. At the time of imposition use the outside of your thumb or forefinger to mix the ashes with a bit of oil.

Prayer to bless your home altar if you are joining worship remotely for Ash Wednesday and Lent:

Creating God, I/ we are gathered with my/our brothers and sisters across time and place. Be present to bless, consecrate this place and time, and nourish us to live in hope. Amen!

May our Lenten journey bless, strengthen and refresh our faith, and renew our relationship with God and one another.

CALL TO WORSHIP: PSALM 51 & JOEL 2

*The people respond with the verses **in bold type**.*

¹Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
**return to me with all your heart, fast
and rend your hearts and not your clothing.**

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, You will not despise.

According to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Look away from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Blow the trumpet in Zion, call a solemn assembly.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

LITANY OF CONFESSION

Most holy and merciful Father:

We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength.

We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven. **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us.

We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways,

and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves, **We confess to you, Lord.**

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts,

and our dishonesty in daily life and work, **We confess to you, Lord.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship,

and our failure to live the faith that is in us, **We confess to you, Lord.**

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done.

For our blindness to human need and suffering,

and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation,

and our lack of concern for those who come after us, **accept our repentance, Lord.**

Through our Lenten journey renew us, and draw us closer in community.

Reform our hearts to your will and our lives to your ways

that we may be shown as disciples of Christ. Amen.

Here the cross is signed upon the forehead of each person with these or similar words: 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.' If you are using this service as a devotional at home rub your thumb or other finger in the prepared ashes and make the sign of the cross on your own forehead. Worshipping with others? You can take turns signing one another. Then offer the following prayer:

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES:

O Lord, let the ashes of this day be a reminder to us that we are but dust.

Bless all who receive ashes this day; may they be a mark of our repentance. May all Christians everywhere keep this Lenten season in preparation for the joy of Easter. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

A time of silent prayer follows the Imposition.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made,
and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may obtain from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

READINGS

A reading from Isaiah, the 58th chapter.

Isaiah 58:1-12

¹Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.

²Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness

and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;

they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

³“Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers.

⁴Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice,

to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free,

and to break every yoke?

⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,

and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them,

and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,

and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you,

the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

¹²Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in. The Word of the Lord, **Thanks...**

A reading from 2nd Corinthians, the 5th chapter. (2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10)

^{20b}We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything. The Word of the Lord, **Thanks be...**

reading from Matthew, the 6th chapter. (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21)

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret;

and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” The Word of the Lord. **Thanks...**

Please be seated.

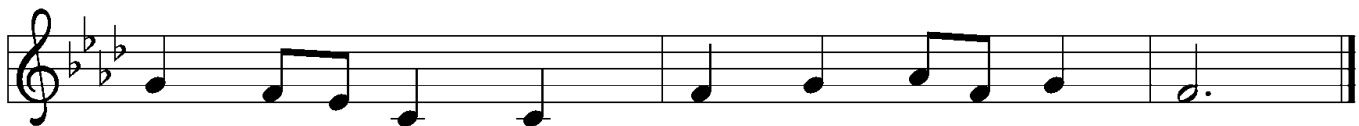
SONG ELW #319 (AT 7:00 P.M. IN HOUSE)



1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days you
2 You strove with Sa - tan, and you won; your
3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet you prayed and
4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, and



prayed and kept the fast; in - spire re - pen - tance
faith - ful - ness en - dured; lend us your nerve, your
fixed your mind a - bove; so teach us to de -
all our earth - ly days, that when the fi - nal



for our sin, and free us from our past.
skill and trust in God's e - ter - nal word.
ny our - selves that we may know God's love.
Eas - ter dawns, we join in heav - en's praise.

PRAYERS / PEACE

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

O God, you gather your church and call us to return to you. Accompany us throughout our Lenten pilgrimage. Create in us clean hearts and renew the faith of all who turn to you this holy season. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Renew the nations, O God. Loosen the bonds of injustice and bring an end to all violence, oppression, and persecution. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Heal your people, O God. Equip us with compassion to care for those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Hear our prayers for those whose needs lay upon our hearts. People of God, for what else shall we pray? ... Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, we give thanks for all your faithful ones of every time and place. Renew us by the example of their lives of prayer and service, and at the last, bring us with them into your everlasting presence. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to bring wholeness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

We share a sign of peace. If you are using this as a devotional to begin Ash Wednesday, you may go to the sending prayer before the Benediction.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is our duty and our great joy to give you thanks, O God,
for your mercy shown through the birth, sacrificial death and resurrection
of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

**and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

THE COMMUNION

We share in the Lord's Body and Blood. Pastor will ask us to take up our communion cup and invite us to commune using these or similar words:

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Blessed are we who are called to his table.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

All who believe that Jesus Christ is truly present in the forms of bread and wine are invited to commune. You are welcome-this is the Lord's Table and Christ invites you! If you have taken an elements cup or are joining us remotely, please commune at any time after the invitation that you wish.

Please be seated for prayer and reflection after you have communed.

SENDING PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Silence for reflection.

Let us pray: Merciful God:

**As we go forward into the days ahead
may the ashes be a reminder to us and to those we meet
that we belong to your Son.**

**May our worship, prayer and penitence this day sustain us these forty days,
and bring us refreshed and renewed
to the celebration of Christ's resurrection at Easter.**

I/We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

We depart in silence.