

# Ash Wednesday

prayer and  
worship guide



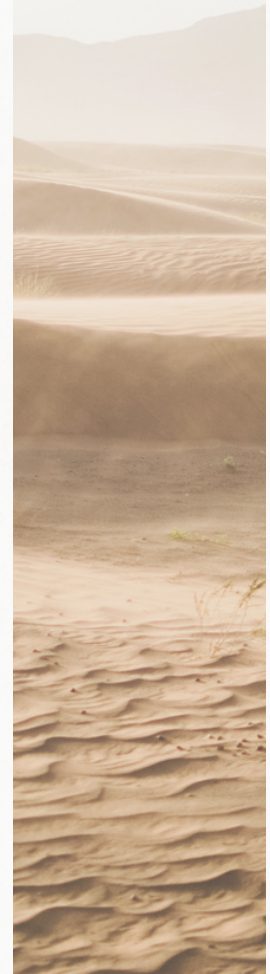


# 40 DAYS OF LENT

Ash Wednesday marks the first day of Lent - a season of fasting and renewal corresponding to Christ's 40 day fast in the desert.

The aim of Ash Wednesday worship is threefold: to meditate on our mortality, sinfulness and need for a savior; to renew our commitment to daily repentance; and to remember with confidence and gratitude that Christ has conquered death and sin. Ash Wednesday worship, then is filled with Gospel truth.

Ashes have a long history in biblical and church traditions. In scripture ashes symbolize frailty and death (Gen. 18:27), sadness or mourning (Esther 4:3), judgement (Lam. 3:16), and repentance (John 3:6). All of these images are caught up in the church's use of ashes as a symbol appropriate for Lent.







## GUIDED PRAYER

*Brothers and sisters in Christ, every year at Easter, during the time of the "Christian Passover," we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to practice with disciplined daily repentance, our daily dying and rising in union with Christ. We begin this season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*



*O Lord my God, long-suffering and full of compassion: Be present with me as I enter this season of Lent in which I recall the Savior's sufferings and celebrate his triumph. Give me your Holy Spirit, so that as I acknowledge my sins and implore your pardon, I may also have the strength to deny my sinful impulses and be upheld in times of temptation through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*Be still. Take your time.  
Allow yourself to listen intently for his voice.  
What do you sense?*

*Remember that he loves you and desires to be with you. Remember also that he is holy and that he can restore you in every way you might have lost your way.*

*What actions or areas of your life might he be bringing to mind, that need to be made right?*

*Spend some time with him in prayer - talk to him about what's going on in your life that has led you to those actions.*

*If you find it difficult to find the words you'd like to say, read this based on Psalm 51 as if you are talking to God:*

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my failures and cleanse me from my sin. Give me courage to be truthful with you. Teach me to be faithful and lead me in your wisdom. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

*Be humble and rest in him. Sense the peace that he has for you. Let him remind you again that he wants the best - his best for you.*

*Place those sinful things - those actions or thoughts at his feet and say you're sorry. Ask him to help you change those things in your life that create separation and shame so that you can stay true to him.*

*He is indeed slow to anger and quick to forgive! Hear him say "I love you my child, now and forever!"*

*Now, live into the blessing of his Grace and Peace!*



# ASH WEDNESDAY



## ***Invocation:***

*Merciful God, we come to you this evening realizing that we are not how you want us to be. Help us to let go of our past, that we may turn toward you and live again the life of faith. Help us call out our fear and hatred, our anger and self-pity. Lift the burden they place on our shoulders. Help us set aside our guilt and enter into a season of healing. As we pray and fast this season, help us become simple people, that we may see you plainly. Let us draw near to you now. Amen*

Ordinary

## ***Call To Confession: Joel 2:12 - 13***

*Yet even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.*

*Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.*

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## ***Prayer of Confession: based on Psalm 51***

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.*

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Amen.*

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## ***Imposition of Ashes***

*Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes remind us of our mortality and penitence and teach us again that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen*

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## ***Assurance of Pardon: based on Isaiah 40***

*Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows! He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our Iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. He will feed his flock like a shepherd and gather the lambs In his arms.*

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## ***Song of Thanksgiving***

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him all creatures here below;  
Praise him above you heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Amen*

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[\*Pastor Hunt's Message: Back To The Garden - Part II\*](#)

*Scan for Worship Set*

