



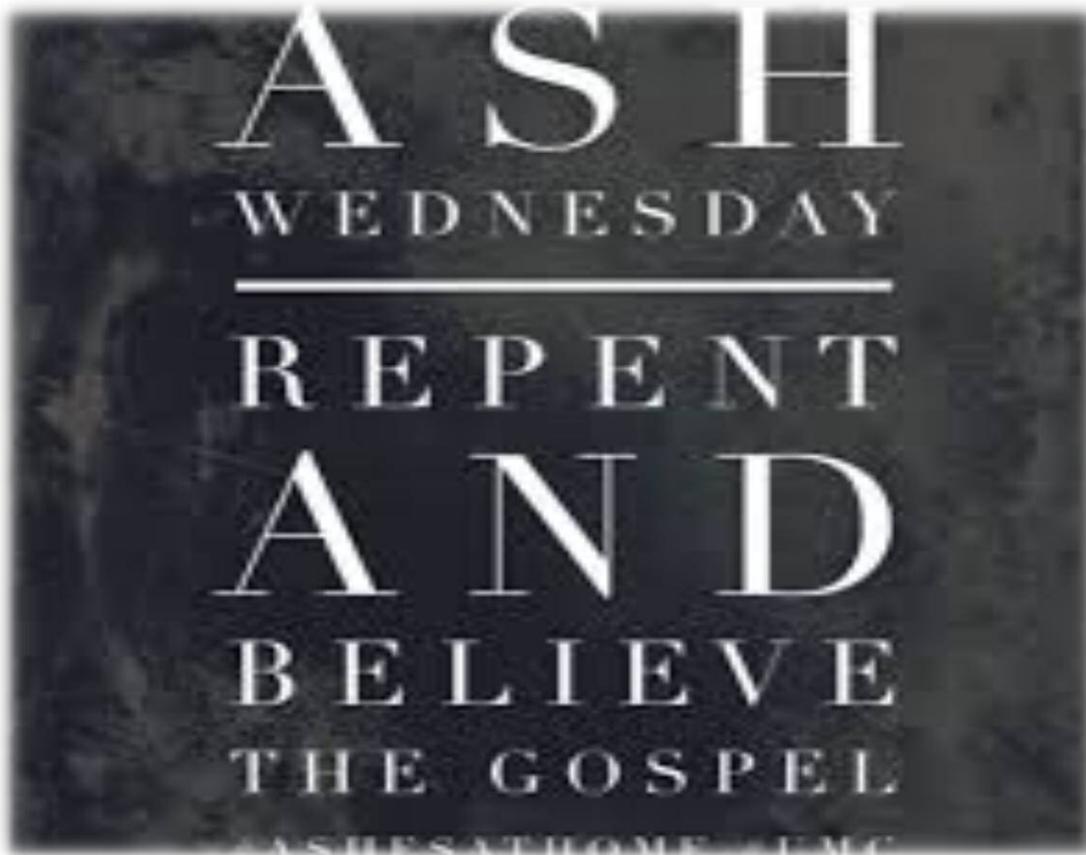
First United Methodist Church of Hanford
Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.



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Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter: We confront our own mortality & confess our sin before God within the community of faith. The form and content of the service focus on the dual themes of sin and death in the light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship, and the Imposition of Ashes can be a powerful nonverbal and experiential way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation.

Welcome to Ash Wednesday @ Home

Ash Wednesday is the day when we gather to begin our 40 day retreat called Lent. Every year we gather at church on this day to remind ourselves that we are not eternal. Yet, this year many of our congregations are close because Covid-19. And because of this, many of us will find ourselves in our homes unsure how we might mark the beginning of Lent.

Or will we?

Below you will find a simple liturgy that is heavily under the implicit and explicit influence of the Ash Wednesday Liturgy given in The United Methodist Church's Book of Worship (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1992). This liturgy works well with one person or many.

To Get Started:

Ashes

If you still have your palms from previous year's Palm Sunday, burn them. You may also mix the ashes with a little bit of olive oil.

DO NOT MIX ASHES WITH WATER: this makes a caustic form of lye.

No Ashes? No problem.

Write a particular sin or hurtful or unjust characteristic on a small piece of paper. They may then be burned instead of the palm branches for the ashes. At a minimum, you may simply use olive oil to trace a cross on your forehead.

Liturgy

Have someone read the rubrics red letters or read them in solitude. If you are praying in solitude, pray and read the entire liturgy. If you are praying with family or friends divide up the readings and prayers so that everyone has a role.

There are four parts to this at-home liturgy: Gather, Word, Respond, Send.

Your Ash Wednesday @ Home Liturgy begins on the next page.

Peace+

GATHER

*WE ARE CALLED TO WORSHIP

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

God's mercy endures for ever and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*WE PRAY

O God, maker of everything and judge of all that you have made, from the dust of the earth you have formed us and from the dust of death you would raise us up. By the redemptive power of the cross, create in us clean hearts and put within us a new spirit, that we may repent of our sins and lead lives worthy of your calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit: one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

WE ASK GOD FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, our lives are laid open before you: as we hear your word today, rescue us from the chaos of sin, and through the death of your Son bring us healing and make us whole in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WE READ FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Joel 2:1-2, 12–17 NIV

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand— a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times nor ever will be in ages to come. “Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing— grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God. Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

The grass withers and the flower fades.

But the word of the Lord endures forever. Amen.

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

A lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

Thanks be to God.

*WE READ THE GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21 NIV

This is the Holy Gospel of the Lord according to Saint Matthew.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in

heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

WE ENTER INTO A HOLY SILENCE

RESPOND

WE ARE INVITED TO OBSERVE A LENTEN DISCIPLINE

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ: the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church. In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

We invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel or bow before our Creator and Redeemer as we are able.

A brief silence is kept as we kneel or bow.

WE CONFESS OUR SIN AND REMEMBER GOD'S PARDON

We pray Psalm 51:1–17 NIV.

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

³ **For I know my transgressions,**
and my sin is always before me.

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned

and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

**⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.**

⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

**⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.**

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

**⁹ Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.**

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

**¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.**

**¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.**

**¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.**

¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

**¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.**

¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

**¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.**

We all confess in silence.

WE GIVE THANKS OVER THE ASHES

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

*WE IMPOSE THE ASHES

Dip a thumb in the ashes and make a cross on the forehead of each person. As they make the sign of the cross, they say:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Repent, and believe the gospel.

Let us pray.

May the almighty and merciful God, who desires not the death of a sinner but that we turn from wickedness and live, accept our repentance, forgive our sins, and restore us by the Holy Spirit to newness of life. Amen.

WE EXCHANGE WORDS OF GOD'S PEACE WITH EACH OTHER

Let us offer one another signs of reconciliation and love.

All exchange signs and words of God's peace.

SEND

*WE PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive our sins As we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen. †

*WE ARE SENT OUT WITH A BLESSING

May the Lord Almighty grant us a restful night, and in the end, peace.
Amen.

WE GO FORTH