



# Ash Wednesday Service

## What is Ash Wednesday?

(1) Ash Wednesday is a wonderfully therapeutic Service in which we get to formally confess our sins, mistakes, and regrets to God – anything we are ashamed of or weighed-down by – and in response, we receive from Him assurances of His love, His forgiveness, His pardon, His deliverance, and of being restored to rightness before His eyes through Christ Jesus.

(2) No one will see or hear what you confess but God. This Service will not embarrass anyone or spotlight anyone. We come together to be guided through a sacred process of privately confessing our shortcomings to God, and to receive the certain assurance from His Word that we are welcome and secure in His forgiveness.

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## Ash Wednesday – First Movement: Confession/Repentance

**From 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.*

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

*Against You and You alone have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight; so You are right in your verdict and justified when You judge.*

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

*Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquity.*

**SONG:** *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (2x)  
Cast me not away from Your Presence,  
O Lord,  
and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation,  
and renew a right spirit within me.*

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

*My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and  
contrite heart, O my Lord, You will not despise.*

(3) Proverbs 28:13 says, “He who conceals His sins  
does not prosper, but whoever confesses and  
renounces them finds mercy.”

**SONG:** *Are you hurting and broken within?  
Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin?  
Jesus is calling.*

*Have you come to the end of yourself?  
Do you thirst for a drink from the well?  
Jesus is calling.*

*O come to the altar,  
the Father's arms are open wide.  
Forgiveness is bought with  
the precious blood of Jesus Christ.*

*Leave behind your regrets and mistakes.  
Come today, there's no reason to wait –  
Jesus is calling.*

*Bring your sorrows and trade them for joy,  
from the ashes a new life is born,  
Jesus is calling!*

*Oh what a Savior, isn't He wonderful!  
Sing hallelujah! Christ is risen!  
Bow down before Him, for He is Lord of all –  
Sing hallelujah! Christ is risen!*

**We bring all our brokenness, faults, and  
shortcomings to You, O God.**

*We acknowledge all our limitations and weaknesses  
before You.*

**All our sinful and selfish actions, thoughts, words,  
and inclinations.**

*We bring all our shames and regrets to You, Lord.*

**We pause now to privately confess our personal sins  
to God. Don't hold anything back; give Him  
everything!**

(Private time of silent confession to God...)

**We lay all these burdens down –**

*all this weight, all this spiritual baggage we carry  
around –*

**we lay them all down at Your feet.**

*And we let go of them. We release our grip on them – and their grip on us.*

**We entrust them into Your care and Your divine covering, through these sacred acts of confession and repentance.**

(4) On Ash Wednesday, we receive the sign of the ashes in the shape of a cross on our foreheads. This is what the ashes represent:

**The ashes cause us to remember our mortality –**

*and we reflect on how God covers us with His immortality.*

**The ashes cause us to remember our sinfulness –**

*and we rejoice at how God covers us with His righteousness.*

**The ashes remind us to grieve our brokenness –**

*and to receive the wonderful miracle of His wholeness.*

**All who would like to may now come forward to receive the symbol of the Ashes...**

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## **Ash Wednesday – Second Movement: Absolution/Pardon**

(5) 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(6) Ash Wednesday is a gift to anyone carrying any kind of emotional, mental, or spiritual weight. To bring it all to the feet of God, lay it all down, release it all into His loving care and covering. And to receive His words of blessing and affirmation of warm, loving restoration.

(7) Ash Wednesday is a service in which we remember our mortality and sinfulness – but not in a way that lays more weight upon our souls. Instead, we remember in a way that allows us to release them into the care of the all-loving and all-powerful God, who Himself covers and cures all our sin.

(8) God Himself pardons and cleanses us from all wrong, and makes us all right in Him. He makes us complete and whole through His gracious love for each and every one of us through Christ, His Son.

**SONG:** *I'm forgiven  
because You were forsaken.  
I'm accepted, You were condemned.  
I'm alive and well, Your Spirit is within me,  
because You died and rose again!*

*Amazing love!, how can it be  
that You, my King, would die for me!?  
Amazing love, I know it's true!  
And it's my joy to honor You –  
in all I do, I honor You!*

*You are my King! You are my King!*

## **Communion – Celebration of the Lord's Supper:**

**Christ our Lord invites to His table all who love Him, who earnestly repent of their sin, and who seek to live in peace with one another.**

*Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved You with our whole heart. We have not done Your will, we have broken Your law, we have rebelled against Your love, we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves, and we have not responded to the cry of the needy. Forgive us, Lord, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God's love toward us! In the Name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!**

*In the Name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!*

**The peace of the Lord be with you.**

*And also with you.*

**Lift up your hearts!**

*We lift them up to the Lord.*

**Let us give thanks to the Lord our God:**

*It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to You, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.*

**You formed us in Your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, Your love remained steadfast.**

*You delivered us from captivity, made a covenant to be our Sovereign God, and spoke to us through the prophets.*

**And so, with Your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise Your Name and join in their unending hymn:**

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.*

**Holy are You, God, and blessed is Your Son Jesus Christ. Your Spirit anointed Him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when You would save Your people. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners like me. By the baptism of His suffering, death, and resurrection, You gave birth to Your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.**

*When the Lord Jesus ascended, He promised to be with us always, in the power of Your Word and Holy Spirit.*

**All who would like to may now come forward, take a piece of bread and a cup of juice and return back to your seat. But do not eat or drink them just yet – we will do that together in unison in just a moment...**

(9) On the night in which Jesus gave Himself up for us, He took bread, gave thanks to God, broke the bread, gave it to His disciples, and said: “Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.”

(All eat the bread together in unison...)

(10) When the supper was over, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks to God, gave it to His disciples, and said: “Drink from this, all of you; this is My blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

(All drink the juice together in unison...)

**And so, in remembrance of these Your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:**

*Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.*

**Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and juice. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by His blood.**

*By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast together with Him at His heavenly banquet.*

**Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in Your holy Church, all honor and glory is Yours, Almighty Father, both now and forevermore. Amen.**

**Let us pray:**

*Our Father, who is in heaven, holy is Your Name. Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us away from temptation, and deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever, Amen.*

**SONG:** *Before the throne of God above,  
I have a strong and perfect plea:  
the great High Priest whose Name is Love,  
who ever lives and pleads for me.  
My name is graven on His hands,  
my name is written on His heart!  
I know that while in heaven He stands,  
no tongue can bid me thence depart.*

*When Satan tempts me to despair,  
and tells me of the guilt within,  
upward I look and see Him there,  
who made an end to all my sin!  
Because the sinless Savior died,  
my sinful soul is counted free!  
For God the Just is satisfied  
to look on Him and pardon me.*

*Halle-lu - jah! Halle - lu - jah!  
Praise the One, risen Son of God!*

*Behold Him there, the risen Lamb,  
my perfect, spotless Righteousness,  
the great unchangeable I AM,  
the King of glory and of grace!  
One with Himself, I cannot die!  
My soul is purchased by His blood!  
My life is hid with Christ on high,  
with Christ, my Savior and my God!*

**If you have confessed your sin to God, and turned in faith to His Son, Jesus, trusting in Him alone for deliverance and salvation, then you are forgiven!**

**You are set free. In Jesus' powerful Name, you are no longer bound to the shame of your sin, nor the power of sin over your life, nor the consequences of sin after your death.**

**Colossians 1:19-23 says, "For God, in all His fullness, was pleased to dwell in Christ, and to reconcile all things to Himself through Christ.**

*He made peace with everything in heaven on earth through Christ's blood, shed on the cross.*

**This includes you, who were once far from God. You were God's enemies, separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions.**

*Yet now, He has reconciled you to Himself by Christ's death in His physical body.*

**As a result, He has brought you into His own Presence, and you are now holy and blameless as you stand before Him, free from accusation!**

*But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it, and do not drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News.*

**In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Go now in peace, and in the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.**