

AN ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE DESIGN

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Summary:

This is an Ash Wednesday service that was designed for a more contemporary setting. Please use songs according to CCLI guidelines.

Length: 7 pages



Ash Wednesday

*“Remember, O mortal,
that you are dust
and to dust you shall return.”*
Genesis 3:19

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent. Lent is a season of the church year where believers reflect on the passion and death of Christ and determine to identify with Christ and renew their commitment to him. Lent is a time of fasting, prayer and simple living that ends with the celebration of Easter. The defining ritual of Ash Wednesday is the imposition of ashes in the shape of a cross on the forehead of the believer accompanied by the words "Remember, O mortal, that you are dust and to dust you shall return" from Genesis 3:19. This is a symbol of identity with Christ and desire to follow him.

Some questions to ponder during Lent:

- What progress am I making in sharing gladly with the poor?
- How is God's grace evident in my attitudes toward those who irritate me?
- How is my corporate worship contributing to community?
- Am I equally charitable to family members?
- Can I re-budget so as to have more to give away?
- Do I speak in defense of those who are unjustly maligned?
- How can I better support legislation that helps the disadvantaged?
- Am I listening more rather than talking more in personal devotion – thanking more than complaining or requesting?
- How am I confronting prejudice in my life?
- How can I practically respond to the hurting people around me, in addition to prayer?
- Am I consistent in attendance in corporate worship setting an example of service and God's worth in my life?

Greeting: (All read **bold** print)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all God's benefits.**

Who forgives all your sins
And heals you;

**Who redeems your life from the grave,
And crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness.**

Call to Worship:

Behold, now is the acceptable time.
Today is the day of God's salvation.

**We tremble in fear and anticipation
at the nearness of a God so great and powerful.**

Return with all your heart,
with weeping, fasting, and mourning.

**God is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

Be reconciled to God, through Christ Jesus,
and receive a new and right spirit within.

**We will fast and pray as an inner discipline,
preparing ourselves for faithful discipleship.**

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Call to Confession (all read):

With trembling hearts, knowing that we seldom discern our own errors, we turn ourselves toward the Eternal One. Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation. Come to the One who takes no delight in burnt offerings, but accepts the sincere prayers of the penitent. Let us repent and believe.

Songs:

HUNGRY by Kathryn Scott

Hungry, I come to You for I know You satisfy
I am empty but I know Your love does not run dry
And so I wait for You; so I wait for You

I'm falling on my knees; offering all of me
Jesus, You're all this heart is living for

Broken, I run to You for Your arms are open wide
I am weary but I know Your touch restores my life

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SWEET MERCI ES by David Ruis

It's our confession Lord, that we are weak
So very weak, but you are strong
And though we've nothing, Lord, to lay at your feet
We come to your feet and say, "Help us along"

A broken heart and a contrite spirit you have yet to deny
Your heart of mercy beats with love's strong current
Let the river flow by your Spirit now, Lord we cry

Let your mercies fall from heaven
Sweet mercies flow from heaven
New mercies for today; shower them down Lord as we pray

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Psalm of Confession (all read): (Psalm 51:1-17)

**Have mercy on me, O God,
According to your loving-kindness;
In your great compassion blot out my offenses.
Wash me through and through from my wickedness
And cleanse me from my sin.**

**For I know my transgressions,
And my sin is ever before me.
Against you only have I sinned.
And done what is evil in your sight.**

**And so you are justified when you speak
And upright in your judgment.
Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,
A sinner from my mother's womb**

**For behold, you look for truth deep within me,
And will make me understand wisdom secretly.**

**Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;
Wash me, and I shall be brighter than snow.
Make me hear of joy and gladness.
That the body you have broken may rejoice.**

**Hide your face from my sins
And blot out my iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me.**

**Cast me not away from your presence
And take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Give me the joy of your saving help again
And sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
I shall teach your ways to the wicked.
And sinners shall return to you.**

**Deliver me from death, O God,
And my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,
O God of my salvation.**

**Open my lips, O Lord,
And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,
But you take no delight in burnt offering.
The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
A broken and contrite heart, O God,
You will not despise.**

Song:

Trisagion (thrice holy) – sing 3 times, first two times unison, third time with harmony

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal one have mercy upon us.

Declaration of forgiveness: (all read **bold** print)

The almighty and merciful God, Source of our salvation in Christ, who desires not the death of a sinner but rather that we turn from wickedness and live; accept your repentance, forgive your sins, and restore you by the Holy Spirit to newness of life.
Amen.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints,
Let us commend ourselves, one another,
And our whole life to Christ our Lord.

To You, O Lord.

The Peace:

Please greet each other with the words “The peace of Christ be with you” celebrating His forgiveness.

Song:

AMAZING GRACE by John Newton

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found was blind but now I see

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed

Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come
‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home

When we’ve been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we first begun

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Homily:

A short talk on the meaning of Ash Wednesday

Imposition of Ashes:

Students are invited to come to the front of the chapel by rows for the imposition of ashes. Leaders will say, “*Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return*” to each person as ashes are imposed. Otherwise, there will be silence during this time.

Thanksgiving: (all read **bold** print)

Let us lift our hearts to God.

**We praise you, O God, for creating this world,
For creating us in your image,
For remaking us after the image of Jesus.
We acknowledge our sin before you,
Trusting in your gracious love toward us.
Accept now our praise to you;**

**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.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Song:

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS by T. Chisholm and W. Runyan

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my father,
There is no shadow of turning with thee,
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not,
As Thou has been, Thou forever will be.

Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness,
Morning by morning new mercies I see,
All I have needed Thy hand has provided,
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness,
To Thy great faithfulness mercy and love.