



## Main St. UMC

### Ash Wednesday at Home 2021

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Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter:  
We confront our own mortality and  
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.

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## Welcome to Ash Wednesday at 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. Because of the circumstances this year, however, many of us will find ourselves in our homes unsure how we might mark the beginning of Lent.

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) as well as a liturgy provided by Fuquay-Varina UMC.

This liturgy works well with one person or many.

### To Get Started:

#### Ashes

You can use the ashes provided by the church this year or, if you still have your palms from last year's Palm Sunday, burn them.

You may also mix the ashes with a drop or two 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.

The **bold words** are to be read aloud, in unison.

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 tonight, 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

<sup>1</sup>Blow the ram's horn in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the residents of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; in fact, it is near—<sup>2</sup>a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and total darkness, like the dawn spreading over the mountains; a great and strong people appears, such as never existed in ages past and never will again in all the generations to come. <sup>12</sup>Even now—this is the LORD's declaration—turn to me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning. <sup>13</sup>Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the LORD your God. For he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and he relents from sending disaster. <sup>14</sup>Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave a blessing behind him, so you can offer a grain offering and a drink offering to the LORD your God. <sup>15</sup>Blow the ram's horn in Zion! Announce a sacred fast; proclaim a solemn assembly. <sup>16</sup>Gather the people; sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the infants, even babies nursing at the breast. Let the groom leave his bedroom, and the bride her honeymoon chamber.

<sup>17</sup>Let the priests, the LORD's ministers, weep between the portico and the altar.

Let them say, “Have pity on your people, LORD, and do not make your inheritance a disgrace, an object of scorn among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

The grass withers and the flower fades.

**But the word of the Lord endures forever. Amen.**

WE READ FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20-6:10

<sup>20</sup>Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf, “Be reconciled to God.” <sup>21</sup>He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. <sup>1</sup>Working together with him, we also appeal to you, “Don’t receive the grace of God in vain.” <sup>2</sup>For he says: “At an acceptable time I listened to you, and in the day of salvation I helped you. See, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation!” <sup>3</sup>We are not giving anyone an occasion for offense, so that the ministry will not be blamed. <sup>4</sup>Instead, as God’s ministers, we commend ourselves in everything: by great endurance, by afflictions, by hardships, by difficulties, <sup>5</sup>by beatings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labors, by sleepless nights, by times of hunger, <sup>6</sup>by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, <sup>7</sup>by the word of truth, by the power of God; through weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, <sup>8</sup>through glory and dishonor, through slander and good report; regarded as deceivers, yet true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, yet recognized; as dying, yet see—we live; as being disciplined, yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as grieving, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, 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

<sup>1</sup>Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup>So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>5</sup>Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. <sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>16</sup>Whenever you fast, don't be gloomy like the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces so that their fasting is obvious to people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting isn't obvious to others but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>19</sup>Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup>But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

**Praise to you, 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 SINS AND REMEMBER GOD'S PARDON

*We pray Psalm 51:1-17*

<sup>1</sup>Be gracious to me, God, according to your faithful love;

**according to your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion.**

<sup>2</sup>Completely wash away my guilt  
and cleanse me from my sin.

<sup>3</sup>**For I am conscious of my rebellion,  
and my sin is always before me.**

<sup>4</sup>Against you—you alone—I have sinned  
and done this evil in your sight.

So you are right when you pass sentence;  
you are blameless when you judge.

<sup>5</sup>**Indeed, I was guilty when I was born;  
I was sinful when my mother conceived me.**

<sup>6</sup>Surely you desire integrity in the inner self,  
and you teach me wisdom deep within.

<sup>7</sup>**Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.**

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

<sup>9</sup>**Turn your face away from my sins  
and blot out all my guilt.**

<sup>10</sup>God, create a clean heart for me  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup>**Do not banish me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.**

<sup>12</sup>Restore the joy of your salvation to me,  
and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit.

<sup>13</sup>**Then I will teach the rebellious your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.**

<sup>14</sup>Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God—  
God of my salvation—  
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

<sup>15</sup>**Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.**

<sup>16</sup>You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it;  
you are not pleased with a burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup>**The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit.  
You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God.**

*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.**