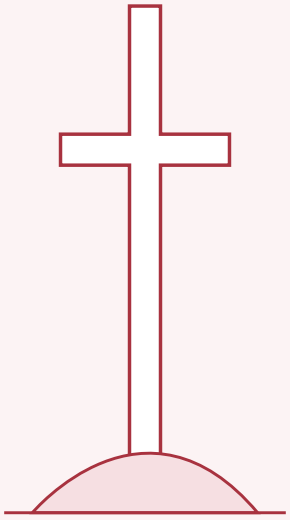
ORDER OF SERVICE

Ash Wednesday service for 2027

A 40-minute order of service for Wednesday, February 10, with readings, prayers and the giving of ashes.



IN THIS ORDER

Call to worship and hymn *About 5 minutes* 2

Prayer of confession and Psalm 51 *About 7 minutes* 2

Ash Wednesday readings *About 9 minutes* 4

Short sermon *About 7 minutes* 5

The giving of ashes *About 5 minutes* 6

Ash Wednesday prayer for a service *About 4 minutes* 6

Closing hymn and blessing *About 3 minutes* 6

The leader reads the lines in regular type. The people answer with the lines in bold. Instructions are in red italic and are not read aloud.

Scripture from the Berean Standard Bible, dedicated to the public domain. Responses and prayers by Church Posting. Any church may copy them.

churchposting.com/resources/worship/ash-wednesday-service/

ABOUT 5 MINUTES

Call to worship and hymn

The pastor welcomes the congregation and says, "Today is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent." The congregation stands for the call to worship from Psalm 103:8-12 and remains standing for the hymn.

LEADER The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in loving devotion.

PEOPLE **He will not always accuse us, nor harbor His anger forever.**

LEADER He has not dealt with us according to our sins or repaid us according to our iniquities.

PEOPLE **For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His loving devotion for those who fear Him.**

LEADER As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

SING Just As I Am

ABOUT 7 MINUTES

Prayer of confession and Psalm 51

The congregation prays the confession together, then reads Psalm 51:1-12 responsively by verse.

ALL PRAY **Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have hidden our sins and excused them. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, forgive us. Create in us clean hearts and renew a right spirit within us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

LEADER Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your loving devotion; according to Your great compassion, blot out my transgressions.

PEOPLE **Wash me clean of my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.**

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

PEOPLE **Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be proved right when You speak and blameless when You judge.**

LEADER Surely I was brought forth in iniquity; I was sinful when my mother conceived me.

PEOPLE **Surely You desire truth in the inmost being; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place.**

LEADER Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

PEOPLE **Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones You have crushed rejoice.**

LEADER Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

PEOPLE **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

LEADER Cast me not away from Your presence; take not Your Holy Spirit from me.

PEOPLE **Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit.**

The pastor declares God's promise to all who confess their sins.

1 JOHN 1:9

> [9]If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

ABOUT 9 MINUTES

Ash Wednesday readings

Three readers take one reading each. The second reader reads 2 Corinthians 5:20 through 6:10 without stopping at the chapter break.

READ JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17

1 Blow the ram's horn in Zion; sound the alarm on My holy mountain! Let all who
dwell in the land tremble, for the Day of the LORD is coming; indeed, it is near– 2 a
day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like the dawn
overspreading the mountains a great and strong army appears, such as never was
of old, nor will ever be in ages to come. 12 "Yet even now," declares the LORD,
"return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning." 13 So rend
your hearts and not your garments, and return to the LORD your God. For He is
gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in loving devotion. And He
relents from sending disaster. 14 Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave a
blessing behind Him–grain and drink offerings for the LORD your God. 15 Blow the
ram's horn in Zion, consecrate a fast, proclaim a sacred assembly. 16 Gather the
people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the aged, gather the children, even
those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her
chamber. 17 Let the priests who minister before the LORD weep between the
portico and the altar, saying, "Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not make Your
heritage a reproach, an object of scorn among the nations. Why should they say
among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20-6:10

20 Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal
through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made
Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the
righteousness of God. 6:1 As God's fellow workers, then, we urge you not to receive
God's grace in vain. 2 For He says: "In the time of favor I heard you, and in the day
of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is the time of favor; now is the day of
salvation! 3 We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no one can discredit our
ministry. 4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in
great endurance; in troubles, hardships, and calamities; 5 in beatings,
imprisonments, and riots; in labor, sleepless nights, and hunger; 6 in purity,
knowledge, patience, and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7 in

> truthful speech and in the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; [8]through glory and dishonor, slander and praise; viewed as imposters, yet genuine; [9]unknown, yet well-known; dying, and yet we live on; punished, yet not killed; [10]sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

READ MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

> [1]"Be careful not to perform your righteous acts before men to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. [2]So when you give to the needy, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. Truly I tell you, they already have their full reward. [3]But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, [4]so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. [5]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 men. Truly I tell you, they already have their full reward. [6]But when you pray, go into your inner room, shut your door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. [16]When you fast, do not be somber like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they already have their full reward. [17]But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, [18]so that your fasting will not be obvious to men, but only to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. [19]Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. [20]But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21]For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

ABOUT 7 MINUTES

Short sermon

Preach for seven minutes from Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 or one of the other readings. Call hearers to repent and believe the gospel. Point to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who reconciles sinners to God. Any fast, gift or ash serves that faith and never purchases God's favor.

ABOUT 5 MINUTES

The giving of ashes

The pastor and assistants stand where the congregation can come forward in one line. Each person giving ashes has a small bowl of ash, a damp cloth and the card for the people who give ashes. Anyone may ask for a prayer without ashes.

Dip your thumb in the ash and make a small cross on the forehead as you speak. Wipe your thumb on the damp cloth when ash builds up.

Each person giving ashes uses one of the two sentences for everyone in line. The first comes from Genesis 3:19 and the second from Mark 1:15.

LEADER Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

LEADER Repent and believe the gospel.

ABOUT 4 MINUTES

Ash Wednesday prayer for a service

PRAYER Holy God, you know every heart in this room. We confess our sins and ask for your mercy. Thank you that Jesus Christ died for sinners and rose again. Give us honest repentance, steady faith and love for the people around us. Teach us to pray, to give and to fast without seeking praise from others. Keep our eyes on Christ and his finished work. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ABOUT 3 MINUTES

Closing hymn and blessing

SING When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14

> 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

The congregation leaves quietly. Assistants close the containers of ash and clean the area before storing or discarding the remaining ash.