

Ash Wednesday

February 14, 2024

Ash Wednesday (Year B)

Ashes remind us of our sin and mortality. We are no different than Israel, David, the Corinthians, or the disciples in that we all fall short of God's standards and need Jesus to reconcile us to the Father. Even our piety is tainted by sin as we practice prayer, giving, and serving with ill motives. We, like David, cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew in me a right spirit." We yearn for God's presence.



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Lesson: Joel 2:12-19

Return to Me!

The Lord called his people to return to him with all their hearts. Instead of tearing their clothing in repentance and sorrow, he urged them to rend their hearts. The God of Israel requires nothing less than his children's undivided devotion. When the neighboring nations thought God had abandoned his people, the Lord had pity on them and came to their aid.

Psalm 51:1-13 (14-19)

Create in Me a Clean Heart

David cried to the Lord for mercy in the face of sinful behavior with another man's wife. His lust and idolatry of his own power got the best of him, and he took what he wanted even though it did not belong to him. When he recognized the wickedness of his ways, he repented and asked God for a new and upright heart.

2 Corinthians 5:20b — 6:10

Be Reconciled to God

Paul explained to the believers in Corinth that as Christ followers, they were called to be ambassadors for Christ, representing him wherever they went and working for reconciliation among all people. This would require great endurance and strength, and yet through it all, God would guide them in their kingdom work.

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Practice Piety in Secret

Jesus instructed his disciples in the ways in which they practiced prayer and generosity. They were not to broadcast it around town; instead, they were to keep it quiet so that their reward came from God and not from any person's praise.

Suggestions for the Day:

- Liturgical Color: Purple
- Use the Apostles' Creed.
- If you are making your own ashes for Ash Wednesday, there is short liturgy that can be used with a small group (catechism students enjoy this). You can find it on the Lent Seasonal Page of Sower along with other liturgies for the day.
- To help the worshipping community understand more about Ash Wednesday, download "Why the Ashes?" and distribute it with the bulletin for the day. It can be found on the Seasonal page for Lent.
- Ash Wednesday is forty days before Easter, excluding Sundays. How will the community journey together through this holy time?

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:

	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
What Has Our God Required of Us?	---	---	---	---	---	web
Chief of Sinners Though I Be	306	---	611	609	187	187
Great is Thy Faithfulness	---	771	809	733	211	211
Just As I Am	296	---	570	592	193	193
He Leadeth Me	501	---	---	---	232	232
I Lay My Sins on Jesus	305	---	606	---	---	web
It is Well With My Soul	---	---	---	---	---	web
Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross	---	---	---	335	140	140
Leaning on the Everlasting Arms	---	780	---	774	208	208
Let Us Break Bread Together	212	---	---	471	83	83

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW= Lutheran Book of Worship, WOVS= With One Voice, ELW= Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress); LSB= The Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing), REC= The ReClaim Hymnal for Church and Home (ReClaim Resources), and *** means you can find it on SOWeR at "Hymns and Music."

CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles

Sunday's Palms are Wednesdays' Ashes (Tune: Beach Spring)
(CCLI# 3413445)
Ashes
(CCLI# 7035696)
Lord, Have Mercy
(CCLI# 2989578)
Secret Place
(CCLI# 3121256)
Give Me Jesus
(CCLI# 4874344)

The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.