

Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday

The tone of Ash Wednesday is one of repentance as the cleansing ashes of Christ's love are inscribed upon our foreheads, the same place where in our baptism we were anointed, washed, and claimed as God's own. Jesus reminds his followers that they are to approach their acts of piety with humility and gratefulness, rather than publicly for the praise of others. Christ is our one true treasure that gives life.



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Joel 2:12-19

The prophet pronounced the destruction that would come on the day of the Lord and called God's people to repentance. The promise attached to sincere repentance and undivided devotion to the Lord was his never-failing mercy and grace for the gathered assembly.

Psalm 51:1-13 (14-19)

King David, having been convicted of his sins against God, confessed his guilt and pleaded for forgiveness. He was greatly distressed that he might be removed from the presence of God. That would have been certain death to the king who strayed from God's ways and took what he wanted even though it didn't belong to him.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

St. Paul explained that Jesus, the sinless lamb of God, took on the sin of all humanity even though he himself had no sin. In exchange, we sinners are granted Christ's righteousness. We who believe are made ambassadors for Christ and servants of God who are called to endure affliction, hardship and scorn in his name.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Jesus warned his disciples about showing off their devotion in front of others. God sees our motives and examines what is in our hearts. Believers have no need to impress anyone, but are taught to pray, give, and fast out of our deep sense of love for God and what he has first done for us.

Rend Your Hearts

David's Cry for Forgiveness

Ambassadors for Christ

Pray in Secret

Suggestions for the Day:

Liturgical Color: Purple

During the Season of Lent:

- Use the Kyrie.
- Omit the Hymn of Praise
- Use the Apostles' Creed.

There is a pre-formatted Ash Wednesday Liturgy that can be downloaded and printed on the "Liturgies & Services" page of SOWeR. You can also copy and paste the liturgy from the PDF into a bulletin if that is preferable.

Use the PDF printable page, "Why the Ashes on Ash Wednesday" to help bring young worshipers understand why we do what we do on this day in the church year. (Find it on SOWeR.)

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:

	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
What Has Our God Required of Us?	---	---	---	---	---	web
I Lay My Sins on Jesus	305	---	606	---	---	web
Just As I Am	296	---	570	592	193	193
Today Your Mercy Calls Us	304	---	915	---	---	web
Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain	301	---	435	---	188	188
Chief Of Sinners Though I Be	306	---	611	609	187	187
Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service	423	---	848	712	---	---
Where Charity and Love Prevail	126	---	845	359	---	---
Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow	282	---	880	568	---	---
Abide With Me	272	---	878	629	62	62

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW= Lutheran Book of Worship, WOV= 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

Lamb of God
(CCLI #16787)

Lord, Listen to Your Children ...
(CCLI # 22829)

We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise
(CCLI # 9990)

Once Again
(CCLI # 1564362)

You are Holy
(CCLI # 2240619)

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