

Ash Wednesday

So our hearts
with Yours accord



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THE SEASON OF LENT

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which kicks off 40 days of prayer and fasting—representing Jesus’ 40 days in the wilderness. The last week of Lent is called Holy Week, during which we remember Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), the Last Supper with His disciples (Maundy Thursday), and His death on the cross (Good Friday). The season officially ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter.

As we prepare for the joy of Easter, Lent reminds us that the Resurrection only occurred after the Crucifixion. It is a time for the Church to symbolically follow Christ into the wilderness. It is a period to empty ourselves of lesser things so that we might be filled with the greater things of the gospel.

Lent helps turn our desires toward Jesus, trading our lesser loves for His greater love. When we enter into the story of Jesus, walking with Him symbolically through the desert and to the cross, we move from self-gratification to self-denial. As we embrace the pain and sorrow of Jesus, we turn away from our sin and toward the Savior.

ASH WEDNESDAY

The first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday sets into motion a season of self examination and self-denial, a time to examine sin, contemplate our mortality, and prepare for Easter. This day historically centers on the receiving of ashes, hence the name, as both a symbol of repentance and commitment to participate in the 40 days of Lent. This practice, putting ash on your forehead, may seem strange, but it's rooted in the Scriptures. Throughout the Bible, those in a state of mourning or repentance would often wear sackcloth and ash as a symbol of their grief. While ashes continued to be used in different Christian ceremonies in the Early Church, we know that around the 8th century Christians began using ashes to mark the beginning of Lent. In many traditions, ash is made of burnt palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday.

Ash Wednesday at The Village Church

We know that the Church Calendar, in particular the season of Lent, is new to many. As we enter into this biblical tradition, we want to be sensitive to those who have never seen or taken part in these practices or who have had negative experiences with them in the past. We also want to make it clear that none of this is about salvation or a way to earn God's love. We are not bound to the seasons and want to be careful that they don't ever become legalistic. Our conviction to practice the Church Calendar is about worship and sanctification and a desire to be shaped and formed more into the image of the Son by the power of the Spirit.

With that said, despite the historical and biblical meaning of the ashes, we have chosen not to incorporate ashes during our services this year. It's something we will reconsider as we continue to walk through the seasons as a church, but we don't feel like it's wise or right for the formation of our people at this time. We believe we can still practice the "why" of Ash Wednesday without the "how" of receiving ashes.

A Note to Parents

We are excited that you are entering into the season of Lent together as a family. This season provides endless opportunities for family discipleship through the framework of time, moments, and milestones. Our Seasons Guide (vll.ge/seasons) has ideas on how to practice Lent as a family.

IDEAS FOR FASTING

Some may choose one thing to fast from for the duration of Lent. Others may choose a different fast for each week. Here are some ideas to help guide you during Lent.

Food

Television and Movies

Social Networking and Internet

Caffeine and Sweets

Radio, Podcasts, and Music

Shopping for Non-Essentials

A Portion of Normal Sleeping Hours

ORDER OF SERVICE

GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

SCRIPTURE READING – Psalm 90:1–17

CONGREGATIONAL SONG – “Lord I Need You”

SCRIPTURE READING – Isaiah 40:6–8 & Romans 5:12–14

CONGREGATIONAL SONG – “First Love”

TEACHING FROM SCRIPTURE

RESPONSIVE READING – 1 Corinthians 15:51–57

SCRIPTURE READING – Psalm 90:1–17

A PRAYER OF MOSES, THE MAN OF GOD.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You return man to dust
and say, "Return, O children of man!"

For a thousand years in your sight
are but as yesterday when it is past,
or as a watch in the night.

You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream,
like grass that is renewed in the morning:

in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.

For we are brought to an end by your anger;
by your wrath we are dismayed.

You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your presence.

For all our days pass away under your wrath;
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

The years of our life are seventy,
or even by reason of strength eighty;
yet their span is but toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.

Who considers the power of your anger,
and your wrath according to the fear of you?

So teach us to number our days
that we may get a heart of wisdom.

Return, O LORD! How long?
Have pity on your servants!

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
and for as many years as we have seen evil.

Let your work be shown to your servants,
and your glorious power to their children.

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!

CONGREGATIONAL SONG – “Lord I Need You”

Lord I come, I confess
Bowing here, I find my rest
Without You, I fall apart
You're the one that guides my heart

Lord, I need You, oh I need You
Every hour, I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You

Where sin runs deep, Your grace is more
Where grace is found is where You are
And where You are, Lord I am free
Holiness is Christ in me

Lord, I need You, oh I need You
Every hour, I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You

So teach my song to rise to You
When temptation comes my way
When I cannot stand, I'll fall on You
Jesus, You're my hope and stay

When I cannot stand, I'll fall on You
Jesus, You're my hope and stay

Lord, I need You, oh I need You
Every hour, I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You
You're my one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You

SCRIPTURE READING – Isaiah 40:6–8 & Romans 5:12–14

A voice says, “Cry!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

 All flesh is grass,

and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

 The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
surely the people are grass.

 The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Isaiah 40:6–8

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.”

Romans 5:12–14

CONGREGATIONAL SONG – “First Love”

God I confess
It's a struggle to focus
Thoughts in my head
Divide my devotion

All I am I surrender
Here and now and forever
You are more than enough
You are more than enough

I often forget
Only You satisfy me
I've settled for less
So would You remind me

Just a day in Your courts
Just a day in Your house
Better than anything else
Better than anything else I've found

Show me Your heart
And all that You are
I want the real thing
The real thing

Take me back to my first love
The awe & wonder that once was
You are more than enough
You are more than enough

All I am I surrender
Here and now and forever
You are more than enough
You are more than enough

This drought in my soul
Only you can replenish
I'm done with the rest
All I need is Your presence

Show me Your heart
And all that You are
I want the real thing
The real thing

Take me back to my first love
The awe & wonder that once was
You are more than enough
You are more than enough

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, A PENITENTIAL ORDER: RITE TWO

TEACHING FROM SCRIPTURE

RESPONSIVE READING – 1 Corinthians 15:51–57

Leader:

"Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

People:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."
"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

Leader:

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."



The Village Church.[®]