

A Prayer for Ash Wednesday

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, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

The ashes are imposed in the shape of the cross with the following words:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. And remember that you are precious in God's sight.

Read Psalm 51

You may also wish to read the Litany of Penitence (BCP 267).

Church image here.

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Why Ashes?

Ashes are an ancient sign of heartfelt faith. From the Middle Ages it became the custom to begin Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross. The reminder that we are dust turns our attention to the creative power of God, and to God's ability to heal the brokenness in our lives when we offer our brokenness to God.

We offer ashes today as a reminder that need, humility, and healing shouldn't be confined to a church building.

The ashes we receive remind us of our need for God. There is much more to the beginning of Lent than ashes alone, and we encourage you to make time this Lent for worship, for the support of others, and for the great traditions of faith in our work of repentance and renewal.

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Gracious God, We are grateful for the gift of Lent. Thank you for knowing our hearts and our need for seasons and rhythms that draw us closer to you. Amen.

God be with you this Lent.

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