

MARCH 1, 2017
ASH WEDNESDAY



God's mercy leads us back to God.

ASH WEDNESDAY BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect upon these Bible passages as part of your Ash Wednesday observance.

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| Wednesday | Matthew 6:1-6,16-21 | Giving, praying, and fasting |
| | 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10 | Messengers of Christ |
| | Joel 2:1-17 | A call to repentance |
| | Psalms 51:1-17 | Have mercy on me, O God |

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

You are kind, God! Please have pity on me. You are always merciful!
Please wipe away my sins. **Psalm 51:1 (CEV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for this Holy Day:

God, create pure hearts in us. Give us new spirits that are faithful to you. Amen. (Psalm 51:10)

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord God, as Lent begins we turn to you for help. Nourish us with this food so that we may be strong to serve you and others with love and kindness. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God wash away all your sins. May God give you a clean heart and a new and faithful spirit. (Psalm 51:7,10)



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A HYMN FOR ASH WEDNESDAY



*Lord, Whose Love in
Humble Service*



CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home or small group:

- Tell about a time you said, "sorry," to someone. What happened when you apologized?
- It takes humility to apologize. How does God's mercy help you live a humble life?
- How does God's mercy and a humble heart help you care for others and creation?

DEVOTIONS



A benefit of fasting is that it helps the mind and body focus on essentials, like food, drink, and God's word, all of which are essential to life. Fasting helps us to repent, that is, turn our attention toward God and away from that which is not necessary for life.

Read: Matthew 6:16-21.

Consider the true riches of life that Jesus urges us to embrace. Offer a prayer thanking God for the gift and treasure of faith in Jesus Christ that opens our lives to humility, prayer, fasting, and giving to the needs of others.

SERVICE



Fasting is associated with Ash Wednesday. In Isaiah 58:6, the fasting God wants is to oppose injustice and the oppression of others. National church websites offer insight into justice issues that need national and global attention. Search for a church website you trust and learn about how to care for and pray for those whose lives need to be set free from oppressive powers.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



The three practices associated with Ash Wednesday and Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Consider ways to emphasize these three practices during the forty days of Lent. Use a calendar for the weeks of Lent and schedule times for prayer (e.g., silent prayer or the Lord's Prayer), fasting (e.g., avoiding solid foods for part or all of a day or choosing a simpler diet for the day with water instead of other beverages), and almsgiving (e.g., give to the needs of others by making out a check to your congregation or to a trusted ministry or service agency). Consider ways to simplify your life by having shared meals with others and by using less technology. Be aware of how these simple disciplines can enhance your sense of humility and joy as a follower of Jesus.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org