

LUTHER'S CATECHISM



Keys and Confession
Ash Wednesday 2020

Why Is It Called Ash Wednesday?

Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday is an ancient ritual of the church that employs a symbol long associated with the contrition aspect of confession. God spoke these words to Adam soon after the fall into sin: “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” Job connected sorrow over sin to this symbol when he lamented, “Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.” Daniel understood he had no right to come before a holy God with pleas for deliverance. “So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.” Jesus attached the same meaning to the symbol: “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” Ashes also connote purification. When Peter wrote “These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed,” he painted a picture in which faith is strengthened as the fire of trials burns away the impure ash of the sinful nature.



While, historically speaking, only Catholics and some Anglicans have been known to wear ashes, Lutherans have begun to attempt to “reclaim” the custom while leaving behind the burden of penance.

Like all symbols, the Imposition of Ashes is a servant of gospel ministry. It has value only in so far as it recalls and enables a deeper understanding of a spiritual truth. God has little interest in ashes; he is concerned with a contrite and repentant heart. For some, ashes will have little impact on their Lenten contrition. For others, however, the ashes imposed on Ash Wednesday may be a powerful reminder of the sorrow over sin that always precedes lifting our eyes to Jesus in faith.

Above all, we demonstrate Christian love in our practices. We do not make judgments on anyone based on their participation in the Imposition of Ashes. In love, we try to understand the perspective of those who either appreciate or struggle with new forms of worship. Think of the “more excellent way” Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 13—love your God and love your neighbor—in whatever way you find to be pleasing and glorifying to our Savior.

ORDER OF SERVICE

OPENING HYMN *With Broken Heart and Contrite Sigh* | CW 303 (1-4)

Remain seated.

OPENING DIALOGUE

M: In the name of the Father, and of the Son +, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: Brothers and sisters in Christ, God created us to know joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. By our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment but to turn to him and live. Therefore, God in his mercy has sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take our place under the law, to suffer for us, and to die the death we deserve. God made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.

During the 40 days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

In our struggles, we will certainly turn to God's Word, but we are also blessed to be able to use resources which help us remember the truths of God's Word, like Luther's Small Catechism. During the six weeks of Lent, our midweek worship services will examine the six chief parts of this Catechism. Today, given the repentant nature of Ash Wednesday, we remember what confession truly is through Luther's words. First: what is confession?

C: Confession has two parts. The one is that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution and forgiveness from the pastor as from God himself, not doubting but firmly believing that our sins are thus forgiven before God in heaven.

M: Second: What sins should we confess?

C: Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

M: Third: How can we recognize these sins?

C: Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments. Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, employer, or employee? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you hurt anyone by word or deed? Have you been dishonest, careless, wasteful, or done other wrong?

Silence for reflection and self-examination

M: Let us confess our sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit ourselves to him.

**C: Most holy and merciful Father,
we confess to you and to one another
that we have sinned by our own fault—
by our own grievous fault—
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.**

M: We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength.
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.
We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us.
We have not been true to the mind of Christ.
We have grieved the Holy Spirit.

C: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness:

M: The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives;
Our self-indulgent appetites and ways;
Our manipulation of other people;
Our anger when our selfish aims are denied;
Our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves;
Our love of worldly goods and comforts;
Our dishonesty in daily life and work;
Our negligence in worship and prayer;
Our failure to show the faith that is in us.

C: We confess to you all these things, and more, dear Lord, and ask you to forgive us:

M: For the wrongs we have done;
For our blindness to human need and suffering;
For our indifference to injustice and cruelty;
For all false judgments;
For uncharitable thoughts toward others;
For our prejudice and contempt for those who differ from us;
For what we think or say or do that goes against your will;

C: Hear our confession, Lord, and let your anger depart from us, for we know your mercy is greater than our sin.

Silence for Reflection and Prayer

Please await the direction of the ushers.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*Those wishing to receive ashes may come forward at the direction of the ushers. All are invited – young children may come forward with a parent. If you do not desire ashes on your forehead please extend your right hand and the pastor will place the ashes on the back of your hand. As the ashes are administered the pastor will speak these words: **“Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.”***

Please stand.

ABSOLUTION

M: The fourth part of confession according to the Small Catechism: How will the pastor assure a penitent sinner of forgiveness?

C: He will say, “By the authority of Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

M: While it is certainly true that we are nothing but dust and ashes because of our sinfulness, God has been merciful to us by sending his only Son, Jesus Christ, to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

RESPONSE

With Broken Heart and Contrite Sigh | CW 303 (5)

PRAYER

M: Almighty and merciful God, you never despise what you have made and always forgive those who turn to you. Create in us such new and contrite hearts that we may truly repent of our sins and obtain your full and gracious pardon; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Be seated.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 59:12-20

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 51a | CWS

Choir will chant the verses.

Congregation will join on refrains and "Glory be".

Refrain

God, have mer - cy on me, a sin-ner,
 have mer - cy on me, O Lord.

Have mercy on me, O God,
 according to your unfailing love;
 according to your great compasion
 blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity
 and cleanse me from my sin.
 For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is always before me.

Refrain

Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight.
Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Refrain

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:2

4:00 - JUNIOR CHOIR ANTHEM

All the Sins of the World

VERSE OF THE DAY

M: Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful,

C: slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Joel 2:13)

Please stand.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 18:9-14

Be seated.

HYMN

Savior, When in Dust to You | CW 124

DEVOTIONAL READING

OFFERING

Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. Guests, please don't feel obligated to take part in the offering. We're just happy you're here as our guest to hear and take to heart the message of Jesus. Please fill out the friendship register as it is passed.

6:30 – CHOIR ANTHEM

We Remember You

Please stand.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

The communicant members of our congregation will be invited to receive the Lord's Supper. Because the Bible has convinced us that Jesus' body and blood are present in the sacrament, and that receiving the sacrament together is a public statement of oneness in our beliefs and commitment, we ask our guests to speak with the pastor prior to communing. We don't want to be presumptuous and put you in the position of stating your agreement with our convictions before we've had an opportunity to explain and prove them from Scripture. The pastor would be happy to explore our convictions with you, on the basis of God's Word, so that you might commune with us in the future!

PREFACE

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who willingly died under the curse of this world's sin so that we may live forever in the light of God's blessing. Therefore with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY - Sanctus

To Tune of Hymn 333

**1 - O holy, holy, holy
Lord God of pow'r and might,
Your glory, earth and heaven
In countless ways recite.**

**3 - Hosanna in the highest!
How truly blest is he
Who in God's name is coming
To set his people free!**

**2 - Hosanna! Come and save us,
Lord God of hosts on high,
And in your grace and mercy
Receive our fervent cry.**

**4 - He comes to bring salvation
And with his blood outpoured,
Deliver us from bondage—
Hosanna, mighty Lord!**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

M: Blessed are you, O Lord, because you have brought us from death to life. With humble and repentant hearts, we praise and thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ,
 who became our substitute under your holy law,
 who destroyed the works of the devil by his perfect obedience
 to your will,
 who willingly carried a cross to pay the debt of the world's sin,
 who lives and reigns to give us life.

Through his body and blood, once given and poured out for us, forgive our sins and strengthen us for our journey heavenward. Unite us to our crucified and risen Lord that we may believe in him, confess him, call on his name, and finally be delivered from this world to the feast of the Lamb, whose kingdom has no end.

C: Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my (+) body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my (+) blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Please stand.

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

CW 317 (1)

1 O Lord, we praise you, bless you, and a-dore you,
In thanks-giv - ing bow be - fore you. Here with your
bod - y and your blood you nour-ish Our weak souls that they may
flour - ish. O Lord, have mer - cy! May your
bod - y, Lord, born of Mar - y, That our sins and sor - rows
did car - ry, And your blood for us plead
In all tri - al, fear, and need: O Lord, have mer - cy!

SACRAMENTAL PRAYER

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

EVENING PRAYER

M: O God our Father, by your mercy and might, the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light. We place into your hands our unfinished tasks, our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes, knowing that only what you bless will prosper. To your great love and protection, we commit each other and all those we love, knowing that you alone are our sure defender; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

C: Amen.

Be seated.

HYMN

Jesus, Grant that Balm and Healing | CW 121 (1, 4)