



Ash Wednesday ~ February 17th

You are invited to prepare a space, using items from your Lenten bags and from around your home. Bring your candle, the pieces marked Ash Wednesday, your Bible and a pen or colored pencils.

Call to Worship

I am here. God is here.

This space is holy ground.

We are here. We are gathered. God is here.

This space is holy ground.

I am here. We are gathered. God is here.

This space is holy ground.

Prayer

Creator God,

There is a rumbling in us that won't let go.

It stirs in us like the wind stirs leaves—inviting us to move, drawing us forth.

When we're quiet, we know that rumble is the Holy Spirit,

Dancing love awake in us.

So we're here.

And we're still.

And we're quiet.

And on this first day of Lent, we're asking you to draw near.

As we hear your scripture read aloud, open the door for us to move.

Invite us in. Rumble us awake.

Gratefully we pray, Amen.

Scripture & Reflect | We tell the truth about ourselves.

Genesis 3:19b “From dust you came, and to dust you shall return.”

Psalms 51:1-12

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. ⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

⁶ You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. ⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Reflect

These verses—spoken to us when we receive the imposition of ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday—reminds us of our humanity. So in full honesty, make a list of 5-10 challenges you are struggling with, recognizing that life is messy and life is complicated. Name anything that is hard or heavy in this moment for you.

Write them down in a journal or on the doodle page. Challenge yourself to think of the core emotion underlying each challenge. For example, instead of simply saying, “I’m busy,” perhaps you might confess: “I overcommit myself because I worry that others will think I’m selfish if I say no.” Name your challenges and your confessions, offering them all to God.

Take a moment to look over your list. Ask God for forgiveness for the things you can control. Ask God for grace for the things you cannot.

tips for young families

Print enough doodle pages for each of your kids to have one. Help them write their challenges, if needed. When you’re finished, display them in a visible place for the season of Lent. If it is difficult for them to think of challenges in their life, invite them to reflect on problems they see in the world that they hope to help change.

The Sign of the Cross

On this one day we wear the sign that says, “I know you are God and I am not. I need you God. Help me to know I am dust and to dust I will return. I am loved and to love I shall return.”. You are invited to take the card with these words and the sign of the cross. You may put the cross on your hand or one your forehead, or you may add it to your space that reminds you are on holy ground and that you are traveling this Lent alongside the One who calls you beloved.

The Invitation

Our God is intimately aware of our humanity and the many ways we fall short or get stuck in the weeds of our own problems. Having confessed and written down some of the challenges that weigh heavily on you, hear the poem, Invited by Rev Sara Are as a reminder of God’s grace:

*I like to imagine that each year, God invites me to a party.
God drops me a note that says,
 “No gifts, casual dress. Come just as you are.”
I like to imagine that I am brave enough to go.
I like to imagine that I decide that I am worth it.
This was no pity invite, There is no obligatory postage.
God wants me there!
So I get myself together, smudged glasses, sensitive ego, wrinkled shirt, and all.
I ring the doorbell a few minutes late on account of the fact that
I lost my keys twice trying to get out the door,
And I almost turn back to hide in my car,
Afraid that I might embarrass myself over appetizers or small talk.
But then God answers the door,
And God says, “You’re here!”
And I smile, because I am.
And with every step past that threshold,
I know that God is cheering me on.
It’s the pride of a parent watching their child take their first step.
If I freeze, God is not disappointed. If I fall, God is not mad.
But if I trust the invitation, If I move closer, I know, God celebrates.
Friends, you’ve got mail. It’s an invitation to dust off your shoes, To go deeper, To trust that
you’re worth it, To lose your keys and your faith,
And then to find them both, along with your worth.
You are invited. We are invited.
Again and again and again. This invitation is for you.*

—Rev. Sarah Are

Claim

Having read scripture and poetry, hearing Pastor Sharyl's homily, and having named the challenges you are facing, now claim and write down 5-10 hopes you have for this Lenten season. Allow these moments of reflection be an encouragement for living life with intention. You can write your hopes in the front of your Lenten Devotional or on a spare piece of paper or on your doodle page. As you write, consider these written hopes to be intentions that you are setting for the six weeks ahead. These are not intended to be aimless wishes on stars, but instead, thoughtful intentions for your one wild and precious life.

Closing Prayer & Benediction

We pray the following words. To make this a kinesthetic prayer, you are invited to circle or underline any phrases that particularly move you or stand out to you.

God of open doors, Open arms, And open conversations,
We know deep in our souls that you are forever inviting us in.
Again & again,

You invite us to take another step closer,
Another step deeper, Another step further, In this journey of faith.
So with your invitation in our hands, We pray for strength and wisdom.
Show us the next right step in this journey.

We are here. You are here. This is holy ground.
May this holy Lenten journey begin once again.
Gratefully we pray, Amen.

