

SAVIOR
SERVANT
FRIEND

SERVICE FOR
ASH WEDNESDAY



FORGIVER

SAVIOR SERVANT FRIEND

SERVICE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

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SERVICE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

ABOUT THE SERVICE

Lent provides us with a perfect chance to explore the extraordinary attributes of our Savior, Servant, and Friend, Jesus. It is a time to marvel at the many blessings we received when he laid down his life for us on the cross and then rose victorious from the grave. This service for Ash Wednesday dwells on the fact that Jesus, our Forgiver, forgives us again and again, even though we do not deserve it.

For each service, the series contains: a complete order of service • sermon • children's sermon • prayers • music for the accompanist

ORDERING INFORMATION

Additional resources are available from Creative Communications for the Parish. Contact us for current pricing and availability. Call us at 1-800-325-9414. Or visit our website:

www.creativecommunications.com.

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COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

[shutterstock.com/image-photo/cross-ashes-on-dark-purple-background-2123445833](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/cross-ashes-on-dark-purple-background-2123445833)

- This **Theme Verse** is read aloud by the pastor at the start of the service or is read silently by the congregation before the service begins:

I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.
John 15:15

- The **Invocation and Call to Worship** are spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P We gather together as friends in the presence of the Triune God who has called us friends. We gather together in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P A friend loves at all times,

C And a brother is born for adversity. (Proverbs 17:17)

P The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,

C **And he makes known to them his covenant. (Psalm 25:14)**

P A man of many companions may come to ruin,

C **But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)**

P What a friend we have in Jesus,

C **All our sins and griefs to bear!**

P Precious Savior, still our refuge—

C **Take it to the Lord in prayer.**

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Meinen Jesum Lass Ich Nicht* 78 78 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Jesus sinners does receive;
Oh, may all this saying ponder
Who in sin's delusions live
And from God and heaven wander.
Here is hope for all who grieve:
Jesus sinners does receive.

We deserve but grief and shame,
Yet his words, rich grace revealing,
Pardon, peace and life proclaim;
Here their ills have perfect healing
Who with humble hearts believe:
Jesus sinners does receive.

Sheep that from the fold did stray
Are not by the Lord forsaken;
Weary souls who lost their way
Are by Christ, the Shepherd, taken
In his arms that they may live:
Jesus sinners does receive.

I, a sinner, come to you
With a penitent confession.
Savior, show me mercy, too;
Grant for all my sins remission.
Let these words my soul relieve:
Jesus sinners does receive.

- The **Confession and Forgiveness** are spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P Jesus, friend of sinners, hear me as I confess my sins.

C **My thoughts have befriended sin and shame, not truth and righteousness.**

P O LORD, you have searched me and known me! (Psalm 139:1)

C **My words have befriended lies and slander, not love and mercy.**

P Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. (Psalm 139:4)

C **My deeds have befriended hate and hurt, not peace and kindness.**

P You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
(Psalm 139:3)

C **Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy!**

*(Please silently reflect on the ways that you have befriended sin—
and yet Jesus still calls you a friend.)*

P Friends in Jesus: You have a Savior who has lived for you, died for you, and left the tomb empty for you. Your Servant Jesus has humbled himself to care for you. Your Friend, Christ Jesus, has cleansed you from all unrighteousness and washed away your sin. Jesus forgives you and loves you. Jesus is your friend now and for all eternity.

C **What a friend we have in Jesus.**

- The **Imposition of Ashes** takes place at this time. The assembly may come forward to receive the imposition of ashes. Ashes are placed on the forehead in the shape of the cross, as the following words are spoken: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” After the imposition is completed, the assembly may be seated for the Prayer of the Day.

- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Lord Jesus, you have invited us to take everything to you in prayer. You know our weaknesses and how we are heavy-laden. You know the burdens that we carry in our hearts and minds. Precious Savior, be our refuge. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us this Lent that we may know your friendship and love. We pray through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

- The **Children’s Sermon** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Needed: a mirror

Ⓟ Friends, I brought a mirror with me so that you all can see yourselves. (*Hold up the mirror so that the children can see themselves.*) It looks like you’ve something on your foreheads. It’s all black and smudgy. If I am being honest, it looks kind of like a mess. What is that? (*Allow the children to respond.*) That’s right! It is a cross of ashes.

Today is Ash Wednesday. Throughout the history of the church and around the world, Christians have started the season of Lent by placing ashes on their foreheads. This may sound rather strange—and in a way it is. But there is a reason for this strange practice. The ashes on our forehead—this mess for all to see—reminds us of the mess that is sin. Our sin makes a mess of God’s gifts and love. Our sin makes a mess in this world and in our lives. Though God made all things perfect, sin has made a mess of it. This ashy mess is a reminder of our sin.

But what shape is this mess in? (*Allow the children to respond.*) That’s right! A cross. That is to remind us that Jesus has remade the mess of sin. These ashes are in the shape of a cross to remind us of Jesus and how he went to the cross to redeem us of our sin. Jesus tells us this: “I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15). Though sin makes a mess, Jesus makes all things new. What a friend we have in Jesus!

(*Pull out the mirror again and show the children their reflections.*) Whenever you look in the mirror, do you know what you will see? Not just a mess. Whenever you look in the mirror, you are looking at a friend of Jesus!

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Joel 2:12-17, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ “Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing

behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

- The **Epistle Reading**, Colossians 1:9-14, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- The **Gospel Reading**, Luke 7:36-49, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."

"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." And he said to her, "Your sins