

Ritual for Making Ashes for Ash Wednesday

“So I charge you: be strong; be courageous! Don’t be afraid or discouraged, for Yahweh your God is with you wherever you go.”
Joshua 1:9

This is a ritual for use at home as you prepare your ashes prior to the streaming Ash Wednesday service.

Let us pray:

Most merciful Creator, we confess that we struggle to trust in your abundance. We grab hold of whatever power or control we can find, whatever we think we need, and hang onto it as tightly as we can. We are afraid to let go so we can open our hands to what you give us.

We rely on numbers or performance reviews as some measure of our worth, forgetting that your grace is unlimited and invaluable. We try to be everything at once. When we focus on ourselves, we fail to see the struggle and pain of our neighbors. In doing so, we reject you, and who you create us to be. We are sorry and we repent. In your mercy, help us to loosen our grasp and to feel your presence holding us up, and holding us together. Amen.



You are now invited to take some paper and write down things that you have been holding or that have been holding you too tightly. Sorrows, grief, resentment, pride, beliefs that no longer serve us, experiences we're ready to turn the page on, relationships or realities that are ready to be surrendered into God's loving hands. Burdens that are too heavy to keep carrying.

After you have written this, place the paper in a ceramic bowl and light it on fire until it is reduced to ash.

Take a moment to remember that when we turn our burdens over to God, Christ's saving love lifts us from the dust of death through the power of the Holy Spirit.

On Ash Wednesday, you will be asked to dip your thumb into the ashes and mark a cross on your forehead or wrist, as a sign of your commitment to be free of this burden.

If you add a few drops of oil (any kind) into your ashes, you'll be able to place ashes onto your and others' foreheads a little more easily. Be sure to have a handy wipe near to clean your fingers!

During Lent, please feel free to keep the remaining bowl of ashes as a reminder of your commitment throughout the season of Lent.

