

FEBRUARY 14, 2024  
ASH WEDNESDAY



*God gives us mercy and forgiveness.*

### ASH WEDNESDAY BIBLE READINGS

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

Wednesday	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17	The Lord's invitation
	Psalms 51:1-17	A prayer for cleansing
	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Ambassadors for Christ
	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21	The practice of faith

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.*

**Psalms 51:1 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for Ash Wednesday:**

God of steadfast love, create in me a clean heart and renew me with a humble spirit ready to receive your forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, for life, for health, for all the goodness that we receive with this gift of food, we give you thanks through the mercy of Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May your heart be filled with the treasures of God's love and mercy.



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### HYMN FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

*Out of the Depths I  
Cry to You*



### ASH WEDNESDAY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

### CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What makes Ash Wednesday a memorable day for you?
- What disciplines or routines would you like to practice this Lent?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Psalm 51:1-17.

The Christian practices of prayer, attention to God through some form of fasting, and almsgiving (providing for the needs of one's neighbor) is at the heart of the disciplines of Lent. It is a time to focus on the spiritual life of the Christian with attention to love of God and love of neighbor. God's law and teaching centers on the love of others. The unifying power of God's creative work is love. As much as we wish to be kind and loving, we still fail at living a life of love. The good news is that it is the very nature of God to forgive and to send us into the future with God's mission to love. We receive mercy and forgiveness, not because we are extremely sorry, but because this is who God is for us, the one who forgives. Our God is full of steadfast love and abundant mercy (v.1). This frees us to return to the God of grace that we now know through Christ and to be honest, humble, and repentant. Psalm 51 is filled with beautiful and memorable language that shows us what this can look and sound like.

*Discuss:* What words from Psalm 51 help you find comfort and forgiveness?

*Pray:* **God of abundant mercy, we thank you for cleansing us of our sin that we may trust in you and your love so that we may love others through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Ash Wednesday Bible Readings and theme, how can you extend God's forgiving presence to someone this week?

### 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, fasting, and almsgiving (giving to the needs of others). 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](http://www.milestonesministry.org)