


Ash Wednesday is March 5th.

Okay, let's deal with the elephant in the room...What, exactly, IS Ash Wednesday.

We never did anything in *my* church when I was little. It was something the Catholics did – going to get a cross pasted on their foreheads with some ashes from somewhere. But we, in the Methodist Church didn't do anything other than know that we were getting close to Easter.

So, what does Ash Wednesday mean, and when did it start, and why do we worship on that day? What follows is a download from a website called:  .

“Ash Wednesday is the **first day of Lent**, a period of 40 days before Easter when Christians prepare for the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a day of repentance, abstinence and fasting, when many Christians receive a cross of ashes on their forehead as a sign of their mortality and their need for God's grace.

“Ash Wednesday, marks the beginning of the penitential Lenten season. It occurs **six and a half weeks before Easter**, depending on the date of Easter itself. This solemn day serves as a reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation with God. Let's delve into its origins and significance.

Origins of Ash Wednesday

“The practice of Ash Wednesday has its roots in ancient Jewish traditions of penance and fasting. In the early Christian church, the length of Lent varied, but eventually, it began six weeks (42 days) before Easter. This provided only 36 days of fasting (excluding Sundays). In the 7th century, an additional 4 days were added before the first Sunday in Lent to establish 40 fasting days, **symbolizing Jesus Christ's fast** in the desert.



“Originally, penitents and grievous sinners in Rome would begin their period of public penance on the first day of Lent. The sinners **spread ashes on themselves, dressed in sackcloth**, and remained apart until reconciled with the Christian community on Maundy Thursday, just before Easter. When these practices fell into disuse (8th–10th century), the beginning of Lent was symbolized by placing ashes on the heads of the entire congregation.

Ash Wednesday Ritual

“The ashes used on Ash Wednesday are made from the palm branches that were blessed on the previous Palm Sunday, when Christians commemorate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The ashes are mixed with holy water or oil and applied to the forehead with the words: “For you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19) or “**Repent, and believe in the Gospel**” (Mark 1:15).

“In Roman Catholicism, Ash Wednesday, together with Good Friday (which marks Jesus’s Crucifixion), is an **obligatory day of fasting and abstinence**. On this day, only one full meal is consumed, and no meat is eaten.

“Ash Wednesday is a solemn reminder of our human frailty and our need for God’s mercy. It also marks the beginning of our spiritual journey toward Easter, when we renew our baptismal vows and celebrate the victory of Christ over sin and death. This day **invites us to turn away from our sins** and to turn toward God, who is rich in compassion and love”

And so we begin a journey that points us to Jerusalem, *Palm Sunday*, *Maundy Thursday*, the crucifixion, the Tomb, and ultimately, the joyous Resurrection of our Lord.

I am your guide on the journey. See you Sundays...

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor David





The Connection

March 2025

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Millington United Methodist Church

**Our Mission: To Know Christ, and to
Make Him Known**



1 Sydney Olmstead
3 Marlene Pletcher
3 River Whitehead
3 Adeline Dueweke
4 Emelia Dueweke
5 Kendra Bailey
5 Mike Moore
6 Karl Sayles
11 Allen Bouse
11 Cecil Yorke, Jr.
11 Don Alvord
11 Barb Bassett
12 Ernest Burns
12 Bill Bushaw
12 Alisha Rice
15 Clara Grace Levis
15 Charles Love
15 Dick Blackmore
17 Maddoc Fabbro
26 Ashten LeVan
29 Kathy Newcombe
30 Joann Helmbold

March Scripture Readings

1 Psalm 34:1
2 Psalm 34:4
3 Psalm 34:6-7
4 Nehemiah 9:5-6
5 Psalm 9:9-10
6 Psalm 13: 5-6
7 1 Chronicles 16:23-24
8 1 Chronicles 16:25-26
9 1 Chronicles 16: 27-29
10 Psalm 16:1
11 Psalm 27:1
12 Psalm 28:7
13 Jeremiah 20:13
14 Psalm 32:7
15 Psalm 40:1
16 Isaiah 25:1
17 Psalm 4 2 :5
18 Psalm 42:11
19 Habakkuk 3:17-18
20 Jeremiah 29:11-13
21 Psalm 46:1-2
22 Psalm 55:16
23 Acts 16:25-26
24 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
25 Ephesians 3:16-17
26 Ephesians 3:18-19
27 Ephesians 3:20-21
28 Psalm 62:1-2
29 Psalm 75:1
30 Colossians 3:15-16
31 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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March National Days

1 National Dadgum That's Good Day
2 National Old Stuff Day
3 National I Want to Be Happy Day
4 National Son's Day
5 National Cheese Doodle Day
6 National Oreo Day
7 National Flapjack Day
8 National Peanut Cluster Day
9 National Barbie Day
10 National Napping Day
11 National Worship of Tools Day
12 National Working Moms Day
13 National K9 Veterans Day
14 National Learn About Butterflies Day
15 National Everything You Think Is Wrong Day
16 National Everything You Do Is Right Day
17 National Corned Beef & Cabbage Day
18 National Awkward Moments Day
19 National Let's Laugh Day
20 National Future Generations Day
21 National Common Courtesy Day
22 National Goof Off Day
23 National Near Miss Day
24 National Cheesesteak Day
25 National Reading Day
26 National Manatee Appreciation Day
27 National Scribble Day
28 National Weed Appreciation Day
29 National Mom & Pop Business Day
30 National Take a Walk in the Park Day
31 National Tater Day

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Finance



Moment

Stewardship cannot be reduced to a program or a yearly campaign to meet the church's budget. Stewardship is an attitude, a way of life in which every area of life is brought into a faith relationship. It is based on three underlying convictions.

First, all of us have a need to give. Imagine a world without generosity. Imagine a world where everyone thought only of themselves. What an impoverished world it would be. The truth is that generosity is an essential part of what it is to be human, made in the image of God, the One 'who gives generously to all'.

Second, the world has a need to receive. Generosity is not only essential to our wholeness. It is also a sign of Christ's love to others. When we share our resources, we participate in God's amazing work.

Third, money has a power to which we need to remain alert. Money brings with it the temptation to place our faith in it. We know it is possible for our possessions to possess us, to gain the whole world and lose our soul in the midst of it all. We know that money can be a wonderful servant, but a terrible master.

What we do with our finances reflects our priorities and commitments. The fact that we live in a culture that tends to emphasize 'never having enough' or that 'bigger is better', or that 'our spiritual needs can be met by material things' means that generosity does not happen by accident or osmosis. It requires intentional resolve and incremental steps of growth in faith.

Excerpts from: A Statement on Christian Financial Stewardship
First Presbyterian Church, Brandon, MB⁰⁷¹⁹



Mission & Outreach Notes:

Many thanks to those who helped furnish items and recommend recipients for the Valentine's Day goodie bags that the Fourth Day ladies assembled and delivered to shut-ins and other deserving people. Each one was gratefully accepted and appreciated. We are always grateful for our church family as we share around the tables of coffee hour. Thank you for making it a successful and enjoyable time to look forward to each Sunday as we are able. We are blessed to have our little people, and our elders mingle. If you know of someone who is not attending church, please invite them to join us. That can be your "outreach". AND everyone appreciates everything we have donated/furnished for our enjoyment. The sign-up sheet is on the table with the bulletins.

Looking ahead, we will be celebrating Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter next. Watch for ways to move our hearts closer to God and Christ during this season through Pastor David's leading. It is a wonderful opportunity to "clean house" in our hearts.

Speaking of "cleaning house," consider renting a space for the M-15 Heritage Route Yard Sale we will host on Saturday, May 3rd. Be sure to mention it to friends, too. A space rents for \$25, and considering the variety of sales likely, it should be a great draw to our venue on the lawn. We have two food trucks scheduled (Cone Appetit and Savage Burger) and restroom and handwashing stations available. Call Barb in the church office to get the paperwork for reserving a spot (or 2 or 3!). Call on Monday to Thursday between 8am and 12noon at (989) 871-3489.

Amid life's storms

The hurricanes that battered the East Coast in fall 2024 also battered my soul. I was over the rain and humidity. I was tired of lugging my two preschoolers through the downpours and driving through flash floods at night. Yet I had no reason to complain. Our house was still standing, with no damage.

The news around us was worrying and heartbreaking. "What if that was us?" I wondered. "Would I be strong enough?"

Then the kids asked to play outside. Even though I knew they'd get wet and muddy, I gave in. When a rainbow appeared, I'd never been more humbled as I remembered: I don't need to be anxious. I don't need to be strong enough. God watches over us all. He knows the hurt and sorrow. And he promises to be "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1, ESV).

Lord, forgive my unbelief. "Hear my cry, O God ... when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Psalm 61:1-2, ESV).

—Kristen Greene

Fasting and feasting

During Lent, consider this practical — and biblical — advice from Arthur Lichtenberger, a former presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church:

- Fast from criticism, and feast on praise.
- Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy.
- Fast from ill-temper, and feast on peace.
- Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment.
- Fast from jealousy, and feast on love.
- Fast from pride, and feast on humility.
- Fast from selfishness, and feast on service.
- Fast from fear, and feast on faith.

Two-way benefits

"When you do nothing, you feel overwhelmed and powerless," observed Connecticut politician Pauline Keezer. "But when you get involved, you feel the sense of hope and accomplishment that comes from knowing you are working to make things better." Indeed, it's impossible to shine light in someone else's life without lighting up your own.

We might think being generous toward another with our time or possessions leaves us with less. But as Jesus said, "Whoever loses their life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39, NIV). How common it is that when we minister to others in Christ's name, we find we have also — or perhaps even more so — received ministry. This is the miracle of God's love at work.

Living water

In the mountains, my mom and I have a favorite riverside picnic spot. Inevitably, we end up removing our socks and shoes, dunking our feet in the icy water. While seeing who can keep both feet submerged the longest, we distract ourselves by admiring the rushing water. Hundreds of gallons from melting snow cascade over rocks and around fallen trees.

Although we're in the same spot visit after visit, the water is always fresh. The same is true about God's presence and his Word. We can revisit the same beloved Scripture and experience the same truths in fresh ways, as "rivers of living water" flow within us (John 7:38).

In *The Attentive Life*, Leighton Ford describes enjoying solitude by a river. "I remembered that the ancient philosopher Heraclitus said it was impossible to step into the same river twice, for a river is always in flux," he writes.

Ford continues: "Yet Heraclitus left out an important truth. A river is more than a succession of millions of disparate drops of water. I can step into a river in this living moment and know it has *never* changed. For each moment of time, each part of creation, each aspect of my life is also lived under the eye of God and is gathered and held in his eternal hand."

-Janna Firestone



Social Security

National Slam the Scam Day

March 6, 2025

On National Slam the Scam Day and throughout the year, we give you the tools to recognize Social Security-related scams and stop scammers from stealing your money and personal information.

Help protect your loved ones and people in your community this Slam the Scam Day by:

Learning about the latest scams. Information can empower you to quickly recognize a scam. Signs of a scam include:

An unexpected problem or offer of a prize or benefit increase,

Pressure to act immediately, and

A request for an unusual payment like cryptocurrency, gift cards, gold bars, and wire transfers, even with the promise of keeping your money “safe.”

Reporting scams as soon as possible. Victims shouldn’t be embarrassed if they shared personal information or suffered a financial loss. We are all vulnerable.

Sharing our [Scam Alert](#) fact sheet and helping educate others about how to protect themselves.

Report Social Security-related scams to the Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General (OIG).



Resting in Jesus

An old hymn declares: I heard the voice of Jesus say, “Come unto me and rest. Lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast.”

I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn and sad.

I found in him a resting-place, and he has made me glad. (Horatius Bonar, 1846)

Many people these days feel exhausted by division, the news, hatred that seems louder than love. More than ever, we who are “weary, worn, and sad” need to hear Jesus say, “Come unto me and rest.”

Jesus wants to be our resting place — but not so we can hide forever from reality. Instead, he offers a place of refreshment where we can relax long enough to remember that not everything is bad; there is gospel to share. Not everything is hatred; God’s love is stronger.

Resting in Jesus, we focus on God’s goodness. We are reminded of love shown by kind people to those in trouble, bold voices speaking for justice, warm friendships that brighten our days. Gladdened by rest, we rise again. Jesus walks with us, as always. We can lean on him every step of the way.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

March 2025						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 10am Worship Transfiguration Sunday	3	4 8:30am Women's 4th Day Fat Tuesday	5 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Service 12 to 1pm Imposition of Ashes & Communion	6	7 World Day of Prayer 	8
9 10am Worship Daylight Saving Time begins	10	11 8:30am Women's 4th Day	12	13	14	15
16 10am Worship	17	18 8:30am Women's 4th Day	19	20  First Day of Spring	21	22
23 10am Worship	24	25 8:30am Women's 4th Day	26	27  SAVE A LIFE GIVE BLOOD <small>shutterstock.com - 1100993063</small>	28	29
30 10am Worship	31	American Red Cross Blood Drive on March 27th Noon to 5:45pm Call 800-733-2767 to Pre-Register Tell a friend!				

A Note from Barb...

I read something the other day that stuck with me and really made me think. Even though I shared it with others already, I think it is a thought worth sharing again.

“Adversity is not simply a tool. It is God’s most effective tool for the advancement of our spiritual lives. The circumstances and events that we see as setbacks are oftentimes the very things that launch us into periods of intense spiritual growth. Once we begin to understand this, and accept it as a spiritual fact of life, adversity becomes easier to bear.”

-Charles Stanley

If we just concentrate on the positive effects of adversity, and how it really does make us stronger, instead of thinking of all the negative setbacks, we will surely start to see that God indeed has a plan and that we are a part of it.

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Our Mission: To know Christ and to make Him known

Check out our Sunday sermon online on our Facebook page at :

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