

Ash Wednesday Services – February 17th, 2021

- 12pm Noon – In person and Online with Facebook Live or Church Website
- 5:30pm – In person only.

We will use Q-tips to impose ashes on the foreheads of those who wish to receive them during the service. This will prevent cross contamination.

People who are remaining home and who will watch online can pick up a small bag of ashes to impose on yourself or on those who reside in your home with you. An instruction card will accompany the ashes. Ashes can be picked up from church by calling 520-458-4432 (office) or emailing revallison@ststephensaz.org to request a packet after Feb. 8th.

Covid protocols of masks, distancing, and sanitizing remain in effect for those attending in person.

About Ash Wednesday:

Ash Wednesday is the Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter and the first day of Lent. The day is named for the practice of imposing ashes, a practice that many Christian congregations have found to be a very meaningful part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy.

Using ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in the Bible (e.g., Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26; Matthew 11:21). The early Christians adopted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence.

Ashes symbolize several aspects of our human existence:

- Ashes remind us of God's condemnation of sin, as God said to Adam, "Dust you are and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).
- Ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. They were used anciently in the absence of soap. Even on Ash Wednesday, this most penitential day, we receive ashes in the form of the cross, the same symbol placed on our forehead in our baptism. Even in this ashen mark of death, we anticipate the new life of Easter.
- Ashes remind us of the shortness of human life, for it is said as we are buried into the ground or as ashes are placed in a columbarium: "We commit this body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust".
- Ashes are a symbol of our need to repent, confess our sins, and return to God.

If you have questions, contact Rev. Allison.