

Conclusion of the Service

If Holy Communion is celebrated, the conclusion follows the table blessing. If the Lord's Supper is not included in the service, the conclusion may take the place of the closing hymn and benediction.

"Savior, When in Dust to You" or another appropriate song may be sung as the closing hymn.

The Prediction of the Passion

The Prediction of the Passion (based on Mark 10:33-34) recalls the determination of Christ in his journey to Jerusalem and the cross. A bell may be tolled at the end of each phrase, as the minister speaks the words of Jesus.

P: Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem...

And the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, who will condemn him to death...

And they will hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock him and scourge him, and finally, they will crucify him...

But on the third day, he will rise.

Worshippers exit the sanctuary in silence.

Ash Wednesday Liturgy

Order for Confession and the Imposition of Ashes



This order of service is meant to be used as the first half of the service of Holy Communion on Ash Wednesday, prior to the lessons and sermon. A conclusion is provided for use at the end of the service.

The minister may begin the service at the entrance to the sanctuary with the reading of PSALM 51. Following the Psalm, "O Lord Throughout These 40 Days" or other appropriate processional may be sung as an entrance hymn.

Call to Worship

P: Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. (Joel 2:13)

C: **Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus said: "If any would come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Mark 8:34)

C: **Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.** (Psalm 23:4)

P: Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus — the pioneer and perfecter of our faith — who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

C: **Lord, we believe; help us in our unbelief.** (Mark 9:24)

"I Lay My Sins on Jesus" or other penitential hymn may be sung.

Prayers of Confession and Repentance

P: Let us draw near to God with an honest heart, confessing our sins to God the Father, and appealing to him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

Silence is observed for reflection and self-examination.

P: Almighty God,

C: **We confess to you that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

P: We have received your many blessings with a lack of gratitude; and have failed to be good stewards of your Creation.

C: **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

P: We have followed our own selfish will and ways, and have failed to be your trusting and obedient servants.

C: **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

P: We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven, and have failed to be your witnesses in the world.

C: **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

P: We confess to you, Lord, all our unfaithfulness – our fear, our anger, our pride, and our trust in our own righteousness.

C: **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

P: We confess to you, Lord, our lack of concern for the needs of others, and our sense of entitlement to all we possess.

C: **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

P: We confess to you, Lord, our negligence in worship, and our rejection of your Word in our lives.

C: **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

P: Create in us a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within us.

C: **Cast us not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from us. Give us the joy of your saving help again, and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Amen**

“Lord Jesus, Think on Me” or other penitential hymn may be sung.

The Imposition of Ashes

P: As children of a fallen humanity, each of us shares in the consequences of human sin. In the words that the Lord first spoke to Adam, he now reminds us all: “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:19)

Therefore, face-to-face, in the presence of God, we offer our confession in the spirit of our ancestor Job, who prayed:

C: **I had heard you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**
(Job 42:5-6)

P: As a sign of repentance, all may come forward to receive the mark of the cross in ashes on their brow.

As worshipers come forward, the minister marks the sign of the cross in ashes on the forehead of each individual, saying:

Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.

During the imposition of ashes, the congregation may observe silence, instrumental music may be played quietly, or a repeating refrain and verses may be sung.

The dialog below follows immediately after.

The Promise of Christ

P: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

C: **that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

P: By the cross and passion of your Son, our Lord,

C: **bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

P: In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake, God forgives you all your sins. By his Holy Spirit, may he grant you true repentance, that you may live with him in righteousness and purity forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

The service continues with the reading of the Scripture lessons, sermon, and creed. While local customs may vary, the Ash Wednesday service normally includes the celebration of Holy Communion.