

February 13, 2024



Ash Wednesday

Being told “remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return” is not exactly what you expect to hear on a day characterized by roses and romantic affirmations. But it seems that is what is about to happen for many in our diocese and for many Christians worldwide.

In 2018, the last time Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day coincided, many articles came out urging Christians to observe the fast and to reschedule Valentine’s Day plans, suggesting that some observe Valentine’s Day on Shrove Tuesday instead. Other articles celebrated an “out” from the sometimes-painful holiday of love, offering Ash Wednesday as a welcome alternative. [USA Today reported](#) that one priest planned to say “Remember that you are beloved, and to love you shall return” in observation of the rare overlap.

But, what if this overlap of Valentine’s Day and Ash Wednesday provides a unique opportunity for reflection?

The Rev. Bonnie-Marie Yagger-Wiggan, Canon for Formation and Parish Life at Trinity Cathedral, reflects on the nature of God’s extravagant love as Ash Wednesday approaches. She writes, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust, you shall return.’ The sooty reminder of our mortality is not our curse. It is, in truth, our blessing. These ashes announce God’s undying love of dust and ash to the world. Listen to these holy words of hope from the prophet Joel read on Ash Wednesday: I am extravagant in love, slow to anger, abounding in mercy. It is the God who made us from the dust, who became flesh, who offers us a home in their eternal joy.”

As we observe Ash Wednesday this year, let us remember that it is Love who makes us from dust and raises us to new life, calling us “beloved.” Love, the one “who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live” (BCP 269, Ezekiel 18:23), is the one who sustains us in our wandering through the penitential season of Lent.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

--Alisa Huston





Ashes To Go

Wednesday, February 14

As Christians mark the start of Lent, clergy and lay ministers in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh will be distributing ashes out in public in communities across multiple counties of southwestern Pennsylvania tomorrow, February 14. This is the 12th year that the diocese has offered “Ashes to Go” for individuals who cannot, or for some reason prefer not, to attend a traditional Ash Wednesday service in a church.

WHAT: Distribution of ashes in public venues and non-traditional settings

WHEN/WHERE: Multiple locations & times (listed chronologically by start time):

- **Mt. Lebanon**, 7:00-8:00 a.m., “T” station, lower entrance, 600 block Shady Dr. East
- **Johnstown**, 8:00-10:00 a.m., Central Park, 507 Main St.
- **Mt. Lebanon**, 9:30-10:30 a.m. drive-thru distribution at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 1066 Washington Rd. (Mayfair Drive parking lot)
- **McCandless**, 9:45 a.m., Sunrise of McCandless, 900 Lincoln Club Dr.
- **Squirrel Hill**, 10:30-11:30 a.m., corner of Forbes & Murray Avenues
- **Hastings, Cambria Co.**, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Conemaugh Miners Medical Center Chapel, 290 Haida Avenue
- **Brackenridge**, 12:00-2:00 p.m., front of St. Barnabas Church, 989 Morgan St.
- **East Liberty/Shadyside**, starting at 12:15 p.m., front steps of Calvary Episcopal Church, 315 Shady Ave.
- **Kittanning**, 12:30-1:30 p.m., front of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 112 N. Water Street across from Riverview Park
- **Squirrel Hill**, 12:30-3:30 p.m., corner of Forbes & Murray Avenues
- **Mt. Lebanon**, 1 - 2 p.m. drive-thru distribution at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 1066 Washington Rd. (Mayfair Drive parking lot)
- **Downtown Pittsburgh**, starting at 1:15 p.m., outside Trinity Cathedral, 300 blk. Sixth Ave.
- **Johnstown**, 3:00-5:00 p.m., Central Park, 507 Main St.
- **Mt. Lebanon**, 4:30-5:30 p.m., “T” station, lower entrance, 600 blk Shady Dr. East
- **East Liberty/Shadyside**, starting at 6 p.m., driveway circle on the northwest side of Calvary Episcopal Church, 315 Shady Ave.



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