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ARTICLE

Glitter Ash Sacrilege: Progressive Church Mocks Ash Wednesday With LGBTQ Ritual



BY PNW STAFF FEBRUARY 18, 2026

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Ash Wednesday is meant to be a solemn day of reflection, humility, and penitence--a ritual that has been observed for centuries as the gateway to Lent. It is a sacred moment in the Christian calendar, marked by ashes applied in the sign of the cross with the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

The ashes are not decoration. They are not political statements. They are a call to repentance, a reminder of human mortality, and a summons to turn toward God. Yet an Atlanta-based progressive church, The Church at Ponce and Highland, has decided to upend all of that with what can only be described as sacrilegious glitter ashes.

The church's website proudly announces that congregants attending its Ash Wednesday service will have a choice between traditional ashes and ashes mixed with purple glitter. The stated purpose of these glittery ashes? To show "remorse at straight Christian cruelty to our LGBTQ siblings" and affirm LGBTQ identity. In other words, this church has hijacked a deeply spiritual ritual, repurposing it as a platform for ideological affirmation rather than repentance before God. Glitter, of all things, is now the vehicle for moral instruction. It is hard to imagine a more blatant distortion of a centuries-old tradition.



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Ash Wednesday has always been about confronting our own sin and acknowledging our dependence on God. It is a moment that calls the faithful to self-examination, humility, and recognition of human frailty. The ritual is stark, austere, and sobering--designed to unsettle the ego, not dazzle it. Glitter ashes, by contrast, celebrate identity and affirm personal pride, supplanting repentance with performative virtue

signaling. The symbolism is inverted: the ashes no longer mark the soul's need for redemption but the congregation's alignment with a social agenda.

This is not a one-off misstep but part of a broader pattern of activist politics infiltrating church rituals. The Church at Ponce and Highland openly rejects traditional frameworks, stating that "Christianity has gotten off track" and promoting a faith centered on doubt, inclusivity, and rejection of eternal punishment. It emphasizes "Jesus's love" over the salvific significance of his death and frames historic Christianity as an oppressive institution responsible for colonialism, slavery, and violence. Within this worldview, Lent becomes less about turning toward God and more about signaling ideological virtue to the world. Ash Wednesday, in short, is no longer an invitation to repentance; it is a platform for social apology.



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The glitter ashes initiative is a glaring example of how certain progressive churches reinterpret centuries-old practices through the lens of contemporary culture wars. It is not just a distortion of Ash Wednesday--it is a rejection of the theological foundations that give the ritual meaning.

By offering glitter ashes alongside traditional ashes, the church presents two competing visions of Christianity: one grounded in repentance and redemption, the other in affirmation of human identity and a secular moral framework. Only one of these is faithful to the historic observance. The other is a performative spectacle masquerading as spirituality.

It is also worth noting that this is not an isolated incident. In recent years, various progressive churches across the country have experimented with "inclusive" rituals, substituting traditional observances with ideologically driven versions. Some have rewritten liturgies to align with political causes, or offered communion in non-traditional forms meant to symbolize social justice rather than Christ's sacrifice. The glitter ashes phenomenon is the logical extreme of that trend: the hollowing out of faith in favor of social signaling.

The worldview underpinning these changes is unmistakable. Moral authority is no longer derived from God or Scripture but from contemporary cultural movements and the approval of marginalized groups. Rituals are evaluated not by their spiritual truth but by their ability to demonstrate ideological alignment. In this context, Ash Wednesday becomes a canvas for progressive virtue, rather than a somber call to repentance. The result is both the trivialization of a sacred ritual and a dangerous redefinition of Christianity itself.

Churches have always served as a moral compass, guiding believers toward humility, confession, and transformation. But when rituals are repurposed to advance secular agendas, the compass spins wildly, and the faithful are left confused about what, exactly, they are celebrating. Glitter ashes are not a symbol of remorse for sin; they are a symbol of a worldview that elevates identity politics over divine truth. They mock centuries of Christian devotion and replace the soul's reckoning with performative sparkle.

Ash Wednesday deserves better than glitter. Christianity deserves better than a church that rebrands penitence as political apology. True repentance is about acknowledging God's standards, confronting personal sin, and seeking reconciliation with Him. Glitter ashes are a distraction, a spectacle, and a sacrilege. They should be condemned--not celebrated--as yet another example of activist ideology corrupting sacred tradition.

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