

Glitter Ash Wednesday promotes the visibility of progressive, queer-positive Christians and the God we worship.

Ash Wednesday is the day in the Christian calendar that marks the beginning of the season of Lent—a season marked by fasting, repentance, and transformation. On this day, people often have their foreheads marked with ashes to signify an acknowledgment of suffering and death, repentance for our role in the violence that pervades our world, and a longing to be transformed.

By being marked with glitter and ashes, we are joining thousands of people in public witness across the U.S., the U.K., and Canada. While ashes are a sign of death, glitter is a sign of hope. Glitter ashes signify the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people who are too often rejected by the church.

Glitter ashes also signify our promise to repent, to show up, to bear witness, and to work for a better world. They are a powerful reminder of St. Augustine's teaching that we cannot despair, because despair paralyzes.

Glitter Ash Wednesday imagines a world of transformation, courage, and resistance and invites us all to bear the mark of inclusion and hope.



***ASH WEDNESDAY
MARCH 2, 2022
HASTINGS, MN***

"WE ARE CHILDREN OF EARTH, YES, AND OF STARRY HEAVEN"

Children of Earth and Starry Heaven.

Whatever our theology, that is true. Simple, clear, and true. We are of Earth. And we are of black holes and supernovae and red dwarfs and yellow stars (especially our own star, Sol). We are (as is Earth herself, come down to it) the children of hydrogen exploding, of molecules coming into being, of all that the universe contains. The interconnected, interdependent web of existence is not only Earthly, but universal.

“Remember you are a child of Earth and Starry Heaven.” So it is not only ashes that remind us who we are and who we need to be...it is also **GLITTER**, a sweet, postmodern reminder of the stars.

—Rev. Catharine Clarenbach

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/naturessacredjourney/2015/02/a-unitarian-universalist-pagans-thoughts-on-ash-wednesday/>

Local Resources

Hastings IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity & Equality Alliance (at www.ideaorganization.org and [on Facebook](#)) is a local grassroots organization devoted to improving inclusivity, diversity, and equality, and committed to BIPoC & LGBTQ+ community members. IDEA seeks an end to the systemic barriers that perpetuate racism.

Thrive in Hastings (on the [Hastings YMCA web site](#) and [on Facebook](#)) is a community-wide initiative to expand conversations and offer learning opportunities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in Hastings.

Transforming Families (tffmn.org and [on Facebook](#)) is a community where transgender, gender non-conforming, and questioning youth and their families come together to support each other in a safe, welcoming space. At monthly gatherings, separate breakout groups for parents, kids, siblings, and teens provide the opportunity to meet and learn from other people traveling the same path.

RECLAIM (www.reclaim.care) provides therapy to queer and trans youth so that they can reclaim their lives from oppression in all its forms. Based in St. Paul, RECLAIM partners with youth ages 13–25 who are marginalized because of their gender identity, gender expression and/or sexual orientation.

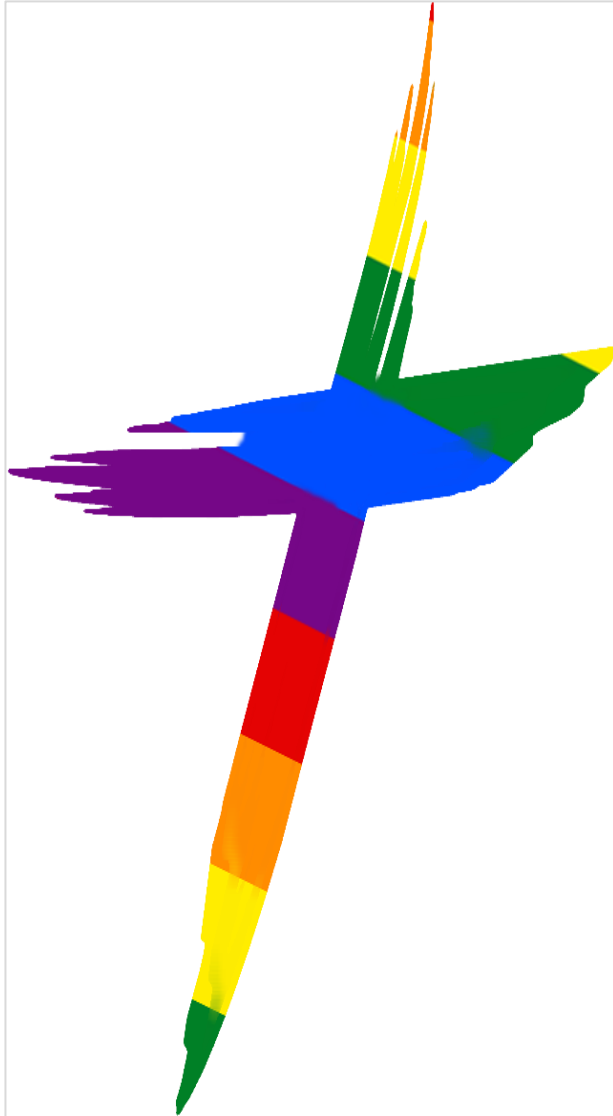
Ash Wednesday: Blessing the Dust

By Jan Richardson

This is the moment
we ask for the blessing
that lives within
the ancient ashes,
that makes its home
inside the soil of
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked
not for sorrow.
And let us be marked
not for shame.
Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are

but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made
and the stars that blaze
in our bones
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.



*Please join in reading the words in **bold**:*

We gather as believers of all sorts

- Believers in the life and resurrection of Jesus
- Believers in the God of Esther and Ezekiel
- Believers in the creative, generative cycles of creation
- Believers in the Ancestors
- Believers in the Prophet
- Believers in human spirit and possibility

To share in a Christian practice of repentance and redemption.

We gather as faithful witnesses.

We gather as witnesses to the Divine possibility that is reflected in each and every human being.

We join in solidarity.

We join in solidarity with those harmed by proclamation of a false and deadly “gospel,” especially all queer and trans souls, those who have survived, and those who have not.

We repent of our sins and our shortcomings.

We grieve our failure to witness to the power of God’s justice, liberation, and love.

We determine to do better.

Through our actions and our words, we will bring to life the Creator’s expansive vision of justice for all people.

Thanksgiving over the Ashes

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth and added stardust to every breath we take. In the Ashes we are mortal beings who suffer. In the glitter we are immortal souls celebrating life. Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence — our immortality and thirst for justice as did Jesus who was willing to die for us. Amen.

Confession and Invitation

People: We confess that we are both broken and beautiful. We confess a God of love who gives us the freedom to choose love or evil. Sometimes we choose evil and we are deeply sorry. Sometimes in our deepest despair the light of hope breaks through. With these ashes and glitter we receive and announce the forgiveness of God. We believe the light. We believe love.

Celebrant: All who would be marked with the Ashes of humility and the Glitter of life, come now.

Sending Forth

You have been marked with Ashes and Glitter. Say to the world, love is a queer thing, it requires everything and gives everything. We come from dust, we return to dust, and in between, we glitter, shimmer and dance in holy light.

Let us go forth, both marked and freed to serve our neighbor, to loose the bonds of injustice, and to shine as if our lives depended on it — because they do!



***Liturgy adapted from one developed by Rev. Ann Craig**