

Lent begins in the ache, the questions, the tension between love and loss. It does not rush toward resolution, but invites us to slow down, to turn with honesty, and to journey with Jesus through wildness, confrontation, and cross. Along the way, we listen to voices from the margins, learn from stories of resistance and renewal, and remember that God meets us not in strength, but in surrender.

This is the work of imagination: to envision a world remade by mercy, to trust that healing is possible even in the shadow of empire, and to practice love that outlasts despair. Lent calls us into this holy labor—not as a solitary act, but as a communal path toward transformation.

### **THE WORK OF IMAGINATION LENTEN SPIRAL**

Spirals, a naturally occurring pattern, often appear when things are in a state of growth and expansion. They can be followed both inward and outward, offering a way to mark personal and spiritual growth through the transformative journey of Lent. We invite you to display the spiral in a visible place in your home where everyone can see it each day.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, each day offers a simple activity for your family to complete together. We know life can get busy, so these practices are intentionally short and sincere—designed to center connection and quality time rather than add pressure. Each week follows a consistent rhythm:

- The Verse of the Week and reflection question provide the foundation for the week's activities.
- Family Meals mark days when we celebrate that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Use the suggested meal practice, or choose another way to eat together.
- Embodiment, Advocacy, and Joy Practices offer different ways to engage the weekly theme.
- Friday Family Conversations include questions for discussion, ideally during an evening meal.
- Saturday Nature Walks invite you to step outside, breathe deeply, and engage nature in a specific way each week.

There are many ways your family can interact with the Lenten Spiral, and no single “right” way to do it. Our hope is that this resource offers a simple, meaningful framework for Lent—one that invites reflection, connection, and lasting memories.



**ASHWEDNESDAY**  
SACRED TURNING • MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21



**THE DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host:  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**OFFERTORY PRAYER**

**Holy and Generous One, receive our gifts of thanksgiving and hope as we share our resources to support the ministries of this faith community, the wider church, and the world. May our offerings meet needs, change lives, and proclaim the goodness of God in the land of the living. Amen.**

**HYMN #197 "JESUS, KEEP ME NEAR THE CROSS"****CHARGE & BLESSING**

Beloved humans,  
created from dust and inhabited by God's Spirit, go into the world with confidence, trusting that God, who knows our frailties, will never abandon us to death, but will accompany us through all of life and to our end. May we be humble enough to know our human weakness, and inspired enough to know our special place in God's heart. Amen.

**POSTLUDE****PRELUDE****GREETING****CALL TO WORSHIP**

Beloved of Christ, let us enter this holy space of worship and this holy time of Lent.

**We come, turning and returning to God.**

We gather knowing that God embraces our whole selves.

**We come laughing or weeping, rejoicing or mourning, confident or doubting, carefree or burdened.**

We begin in dust and in quiet, seeking courage to begin again.

**We come, for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

We take on the disciplines of Lent as acts of faithful resistance.

**We come to dream of a world renewed. We imagine a world at peace. We lift our voices in praise.**

**PRAYER**

**Creating God, you breathed life into the dust of this world, forming us in beauty and in love. As we mark ourselves with ashes and confront the twin truths of life and death, humble our hearts and draw us close to the promise of resurrection which you have given to us through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, your son and our Savior. Amen**

**HYMN**

**"LEAD ME TO THE CROSS"**

**VERSE 1 & 2 CHOIR, 3-5 ALL**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Siblings in Christ, let us confess our sins to God, laying down our burden of guilt into the grave of forgiven wrongs, where shame is conquered forever. Holy God, you created life from dirt, breathing air into our lungs, and entrusting us to live rightly. Today, as we remember our mortality with ashes and prayer, we confess our ten-

dency to forget.

**We have forgotten our Creator. We have forgotten that we came from dust and we shall return to dust.**

Remind us of our fragile humanness, held delicately in the palm of your hand. Remind us to observe and appreciate creation—this incredible universe imagined for your glory and life's flourishing.

**Forgive us for living as if we are invincible. Forgive us for living as if we are powerless.**

For you are both the great God of all living things and the precious Spirit that inhabits each of us.

**Have mercy upon us, your children. Amen.**

## SILENT PRAYER AND MEDITATION

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Beloved, God knows we lose sight of our place in creation, falling into arrogance or misery, forgetting God's mercy. Remember and receive God's pardon and be at peace. Amen

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**God who breathes meaning and inspiration into our sacred scriptures, who crafts stories of redemption, liberation, and love, may these words help us imagine the world you intended as we contemplate the fragility of life. Amen.**

### SCRIPTURE

**Matthew 6:1-6,16-21**

### SERMON "Sacred Turning"

### IMPOSITION OF ASHES

One: Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a time of discernment, reflection, and growth. We pause now to remember our mortality and the cycle of life: birth, death, new life. In the same manner, may we also remember the cycle of prophetic imagination: critique, lament, imagine. We are called as God's people into both of these cycles, providing renewal and hope. As

these ashes are placed on your forehead, remember you were formed from the dust of the earth and given life by the breath of God. Remembering we are dust doesn't diminish our worth or cleanliness; rather, it affirms our integral, connected place in this beautiful work of God's love. We were made with love, and when we die, God will receive us with love. Let us pause today to remember our mortality, thank God for this precious life, and commit ourselves to the work of imagination.

**Remember you are from dust, and to dust you shall return**

## SERVICE OF ASHES

(All are invited to come forward to receive the ashes. If unable, please signal the pastor and the ashes will be brought to you)

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe the death and life cycles of creation are a gift to our survival. We believe there is a season for life and death, from spring to winter, or the rainy season to the dry season. We believe God breathes life into dust, transforming the decay of our universe into life itself. We grieve when death is wrought by sin and injustice. We lament when we lose the people and pets we love. We trust that in God's dream of a righteous, loving kin(g)dom, even death will be made right. We believe God's creative imagination is bound not by binaries or hierarchies or life and death, but only by love and justice. When our lives end, we believe our souls, formed by the very breath of God, live in glory with Jesus. We believe every life is worthy of dignity, even in death.**

## HYMN 207 "JUST AS I AM"

## SERVICE OF OFFERING

(With clean hearts and renewed spirits, we invite all to offer their gifts of time, treasure and talent up to God.)