

Service Notes: Ash Wednesday [Evening]

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These notes pertain to the **evening** Ash Wednesday service. When an early morning service is observed, it is typically held in the “Little St. Anne’s” chapel with limited ceremonial.

Times

- Service begins at 6:30 p.m.
- Altar party, including acolytes, should arrive no later than 6:15 p.m.

Roles to Assign

This service requires all the normal roles of a typical Sunday morning.

- Master of Ceremonies
- Acolytes and acolyte masters
- 2 Lectors
- 1 or 2 Eucharistic Ministers
(depending on the number of clergy)
- Ushers and greeters
- Choir and musicians
- Sound technician

M.C. Notes

- The Ash Wednesday service is located in the Missal.
- Prepare the sanctuary for worship in the manner customary to a Sunday morning.
- Florescent lights remain off for the entirety of this service.
- Lectionary readings for Ash Wednesday are in the standard Lectionary book used on Sunday mornings.
- Mark the plain Gospel book without the gold cover.
- After the Invitation to a Holy Lent (BCP 264-265) the M.C. and clergy kneel at the rail to observe silence. At the end of the silence, the M.C. and celebrant return to the Altar, accompanied by the thurifer, for the blessing of the ashes.
- At the altar, the celebrant imposes ashes upon the M.C. and other clergy, one of whom then imposes ashes upon the celebrant, after which they impose the congregation.
- After the imposition of ashes, the priests wash their hands and walk with the M.C. around the closed rail to kneel at the center for the recitation of Psalm 51 (BCP 266) and the Litany of Penitence (BCP 267).
- After the Peace, the service is a standard Eucharist, typically using Prayer C.
- In place of the normal blessing at the end of the service, the celebrant may use the Solemn Prayer Over the People for Ash Wednesday. The Solemn Prayers are located under “Season Blessings” in the *Book of Occasional Services*.

Acolyte Master Notes

- Given the solemnity of the day, it is imperative that all acolytes observe silence in the sacristy before the service so sound will not carry into the sanctuary.

- Use the plain Gospel book without the gold cover.
- As is customary at St. Anne's, acolytes are seated in the congregational pews after the Gospel and remain there until the Peace.
- Acolytes seated on the front chairs should kneel at the rail during the lengthy silence (BCP 265), Psalm 51 (BCP 266), and the Litany of Penitence (BCP 267).
- In addition to the procession and the offertory, incense is also needed for the blessing of the ashes, which takes place shortly after the sermon. The thurifer should light the coals at the end of the sermon and prepare them quickly in the sacristy during the Invitation to a Holy Lent and the lengthy silence that follows (BCP 264-265). When the coals are sufficiently hot, the thurifer enters the sanctuary and waits to the side until the celebrant stands. As the celebrant and M.C. approach the altar for the blessing of the ashes, the thurifer accompanies them. After the ashes are censed, the thurifer replaces the thurible in the sacristy and return to his or her seats.
- Immediately after the blessing of the ashes (BCP 265), one or two acolytes come forward and close the communion rail.
- Immediately after the imposition of ashes, an acolyte assists the priests in washing their hands.
- After the Peace, the service is a standard Eucharist.

Music Notes

- The service begins in silence. No prelude, processional hymn, or chimes are played.
- Even though no music is sung, the choir does process.
- Space permitting, the choir comes down to the front pews during the Gospel as usual. The sermon and imposition of ashes follow. After they come forward for the imposition of ashes, they should return to their congregational pews until the Peace.
- The imposition of ashes is done in silence; no hymn, anthem, or other musical piece is appropriate at this time.
- After the Peace, the choir returns to the choir stalls. From this point, the service is a standard Eucharist.
- The sanctus and fraction anthem are sung in the customary manner.

Usher Notes

- At the imposition of ashes, ushers will need to guide people to the rail just as they would guide them during Communion.
- Unless otherwise instructed by the M.C. or celebrant, a collection is typically taken on Ash Wednesday in the manner customary to a Sunday morning.