

ECMN Ash Wednesday Recommendations

As faith communities plan for Ash Wednesday services, there are several options that fit within the current health guidelines and ECMN regathering protocols.

In November, Bishop Loya released [a theological reflection about Eucharist](#) which included two safe and appropriate options for the Eucharist during the pandemic. In these guidelines, we are suggesting the same two approaches: online and drive-through.

Our colleagues Anna Ostenso Moore and Jennifer McNally have put together [this at-home resource](#) for use by individuals and families.

It is important to remember that there is no requirement for ashes to be imposed on Ash Wednesday. This is an option in the tradition and an act of piety that is deeply meaningful for many, but is in no way required. For further historical and theological background, [please see this reflection from Bishop Neil Alexander](#).

Note: Any baptized persons, including older children and teens, may place the ashes on the foreheads of others in their households or on their own foreheads. One does not have to be ordained to impose ashes on others or on oneself.

Online worship

- Invite people to gather ashes and place them in a small dish or bowl. Ashes may be from your own fireplace or fire pit, or from the burning of leaves. If you have palm branches or palm crosses from previous years, these are particularly appropriate to burn. Very little ash is needed.
- Churches may also invite people to pick up pre-packaged ashes from your church.
- Offer either a live or pre-recorded liturgy which includes the collect, readings, homily, invitation to a Holy Lent, and prayer over the ashes (BCP 264-265)
- The Officiant can then invite households to dip a thumb into the ashes and trace the sign of the cross on one another.
- The service can continue once time has been allowed for all to receive the ashes.

Drive-through

Invite people to participate in an online liturgy and drive to the church following to receive the imposition of ashes.

- Require masks of all persons at all times.
- Arrange ashes in individuals cups on a tray ahead of time
- One household at a time, invite people to step out of their car.
- The priest may say the prayer over the ashes on page 265 of the BCP. The people take a cup from a tray and impose ashes on themselves or on one another while saying "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
- If it is desired for the priest to impose ashes, the priest may do so using a q-tip.