



# AN ADAPTABLE AT-HOME LITURGY **For Ash Wednesday**

Written by Rev. Sarah Are

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*Liturgy by Rev. Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org).*

## **Introduction**

The beginning of Lent brings a new invitation—an invitation into a deeper life of faith, an invitation to renewed spirituality, and an invitation into deeper awareness of God and self. This liturgy is designed to carve out space for personal reflection and intention-setting at the start, knowing that the more honest we are with our hopes for this season, the more meaningful this season can become. This liturgy was written to be used by individuals or young families at home.

## **Some Hymns & Music That Might Be Fitting**

All Belong Here, words and music by The Many

[All Belong Here - The Many - Lyric Video - YouTube](#)

"Ash Wednesday Comes and, Lord, We Hear"

Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette; Tune: TALLIS' CANON 8.8.8.8

[https://www.carolynshymns.com/ash\\_wednesday\\_comes\\_and\\_lord\\_we\\_hear.html](https://www.carolynshymns.com/ash_wednesday_comes_and_lord_we_hear.html)

"Bless the Lord" From the Taizé community, France. © 1991.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4Svh-9ohg4>

"O God, As We Pause"

Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette; Tune: ST. DENIO 11.11.11.11

[https://www.carolynshymns.com/o\\_god\\_as\\_we\\_pause.html](https://www.carolynshymns.com/o_god_as_we_pause.html)

## Supplies Needed

A candle and lighter

A Bible and pen

Printed copies of the Ash Wednesday doodle page, one for each participant

([see accompanying link](#))

A device to watch a short video

A journal (optional)

## Set the Space

God is in every space. And God promises to draw near to us wherever we may be.

As you prepare for this time of worship, “set” your space so that your soul knows:  
*this is holy ground.*

*Tips for young families: invite your kids to collect the needed supplies from around the house: pens, Bible, candle, lighter, etc. Invite them to light the candle.*

*Before you begin, invite your children to create a special place for your all to sit and reflect: pillows on the floor, space at the table, etc.*

Take a few deep breaths in and out. Repeat to yourself:

*I am here. God is here.*

*This space is holy ground.*

## Opening Prayer

Now that the space is set, and your candle is lit, begin with prayer.

Read the following words as an opening prayer. To make this a kinesthetic prayer, circle or underline any phrases that particularly move you or stand out to you.

PRAY

Creator God,

There is a rumbling in us that won't let go.

It stirs in us like the wind stirs leaves—inviting us to move, drawing us forth.

When we're quiet, we know that rumble is the Holy Spirit,

Dancing love awake in us.

So we're here.

And we're still.

And we're quiet.

And on this first day of Lent, we're asking you to draw near.

As we hear your scripture read aloud, open the door for us to move.

Invite us in. Rumble us awake.  
Gratefully we pray, Amen.

### **Read & Reflect | Beginning With Honesty**

Read Genesis 3:19b

“From dust you came, and to dust you shall return.”

#### Reflect

This verse—spoken to us when we receive the imposition of ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday—reminds us of our humanity. So in full honesty, make a list of 5-10 challenges you are struggling with, recognizing that life is messy and life is complicated. Name anything that is hard or heavy in this moment. Write them down in your journal or on the doodle page (*included with this liturgy*). Challenge yourself to think of the core emotion underlying each challenge. For example, instead of simply saying, “I’m busy,” perhaps you might confess: “I overcommit myself because I worry that others will think I’m selfish if I say no.”

Name your challenges and your confessions, offering them all to God.

Take a moment to look over your list. Ask God for forgiveness for the things you can control.

Ask God for grace for the things you cannot.

#### Tips for Young Families

Print enough doodle pages for each of your kids to have one. Help them write their challenges, if needed. When you’re finished, display them in a visible place for the season of Lent. If it is difficult for them to think of challenges in their life, invite them to reflect on problems they see in the world that they hope to help change.

Read “Invited” a poem by Sarah Are

Our God is intimately aware of our humanity and the many ways we fall short or get stuck in the weeds of our own problems. Having confessed and written down some of the challenges that weigh heavily on you, read the following poem as a reminder of God’s grace:

*I like to imagine that each year,  
God invites me to a party.*

*God drops me a note that says,  
"No gifts, casual dress. Come just as you are."*

*I like to imagine that I am brave enough to go.  
I like to imagine that I decide that I am worth it.  
This was no pity invite,  
There is no obligatory postage.  
God wants me there.*

*So I get myself together,  
Smudged glasses, sensitive ego, wrinkled shirt, and all.  
I ring the doorbell a few minutes late on account of the fact that  
I lost my keys twice trying to get out the door,  
And I almost turn back to hide in my car,  
Afraid that I might embarrass myself over appetizers or small talk.  
But then God answers the door,  
And God says, "You're here!"  
And I smile, because I am.*

*And with every step past that threshold,  
I know that God is cheering me on.  
It's the pride of a parent watching their child take their first step.  
If I freeze, God is not disappointed.  
If I fall, God is not mad.  
But if I trust the invitation,  
If I move closer,  
I know, God celebrates.*

*Friends, you've got mail.  
It's an invitation to dust off your shoes,  
To go deeper,  
To trust that you're worth it,  
To lose your keys and your faith,  
And then to find them both, along with your worth.  
You are invited.  
We are invited.*

*Again and again and again.*

*This invitation is for you.*

—Rev. Sarah Are

### **Respond | Intention Setting**

Watch one (or both!) of the following short videos. Both videos are invitations to a richer, more meaningful, more intentional life.

“A Pep Talk from Kid President to You” [youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o](https://youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o)

*Created by Kid President and Brad Montague. Published by SoulPancake.*

“The Present” [youtube.com/watch?v=WjqIU5FgsYc](https://youtube.com/watch?v=WjqIU5FgsYc)

*“The Present” is a thesis short from the Institute of Animation, Visual Effects and Digital Postproduction at the Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg in Ludwigsburg, Germany.*

Write

Having read scripture and poetry, named the challenges you are facing, and watched these invitational videos, now write down 5-10 hopes you have for this Lenten season. Allow these videos to be encouragement for living life with intention. You can write your hopes in your journal or on your doodle page.

As you write, consider these written hopes to be intentions that you are setting for the six weeks ahead. These are not intended to be aimless wishes on stars, but instead, thoughtful intentions for your one wild and precious life.<sup>1</sup>

### **Closing Prayer & Benediction**

Pray the following words. To make this a kinesthetic prayer, circle or underline any phrases that particularly move you or stand out to you.

God of open doors,  
Open arms,  
And open conversations,  
We know  
Deep in our souls  
That you are forever inviting us in.  
Again and again,  
You invite us to take another step closer,  
Another step deeper,

Another step further,  
In this journey of faith.  
So with your invitation in our hands,  
We pray for strength and wisdom.  
Show us the next right step in this journey.  
We are here.  
You are here.  
This is holy ground.  
May this holy Lenten journey begin  
Once again.  
Gratefully we pray,  
Amen.

<sup>1</sup> This is an allusion to the poem, "The Summer Day," by Mary Oliver.

## About the Author

Rev. Sarah Are, *Founding Creative Partner of A Sanctified Art*. Sarah (*she/her*) is the Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas. She graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a degree in Social Work, and holds a Master of Divinity degree from Columbia Theological Seminary. Sarah loves to combine her love of all things creative with her passion for God. She believes that the Church has a responsibility to open every door to God, so that those of us who are visual, kinesthetic, or relational learners all have equal opportunity to engage God to the fullest of our abilities. Sarah feels called to live her life welcoming people into the church by using her energy and passion for beautifully scripted words, raw and relevant liturgy, and hands-on worship experiences to engage our longing for God and the need for justice in this messy world.