



*Have a meaningful  
Ash Wednesday!*

# Ash Wednesday

Christian

[Ash Wed-nes-day](#) 

The Day of Ashes is a day of repentance when Christians confess and mourn their sins, and profess their devotion to God. During worship services, a religious leader places the ashes on a worshiper's forehead in the shape of a cross.

Ash Wednesday is observed by Catholics; some Protestant denominations such as Lutherans, Moravians, Anglicans, Methodists, and Nazarenes; and some churches in the Reformed tradition, including certain Congregationalist, Continental Reformed, and Presbyterian churches.



This collection of information sheets on major holidays and cultural events is a joint partnership of the School of Information staff, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Office of the Provost. Facts have been vetted by U-M's Association of Religious Counselors (ARC), and other campus groups. Public feedback is welcome; please email [DEIHolidayFacts@umich.edu](mailto:DEIHolidayFacts@umich.edu).

## Date

- Ash Wednesday takes place 46 days before Easter Sunday.
- Check the [Calendar Index](#) for Religious Holidays during the current academic year for the exact date.

## Greetings

Wishing a celebrant "I hope you have a meaningful (or blessed) Ash Wednesday" is welcome.

## Common Practices and Celebrations

- Observers are likely to attend worship services and leave the smudge of the ashes on their forehead throughout the day as a way to show their faith publicly.
- It is a penitential celebration that involves fasting, abstinence and prayer.

## Common Dietary Restrictions

- Ash Wednesday is a day of obligatory fasting and abstinence.

## Impact to U-M Community

- Ash Wednesday observers may suspend work on this day and request to have this day off. Observers may be fasting.
- Link to [U-M Guidance Regarding Conflicts](#).

## U-M Campus Resources

- [Maize Pages - Christian](#), U-M
- [Association of Religious Counselors](#), U-M

## Information Sources

- [Melton, J. Gordon. "Ash Wednesday." In Religious Celebrations: An Encyclopedia of Holidays, Festivals, Solemn Observances, and Spiritual Commemorations, 2011.](#)
- [Wikipedia](#)

## Photo credit:

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