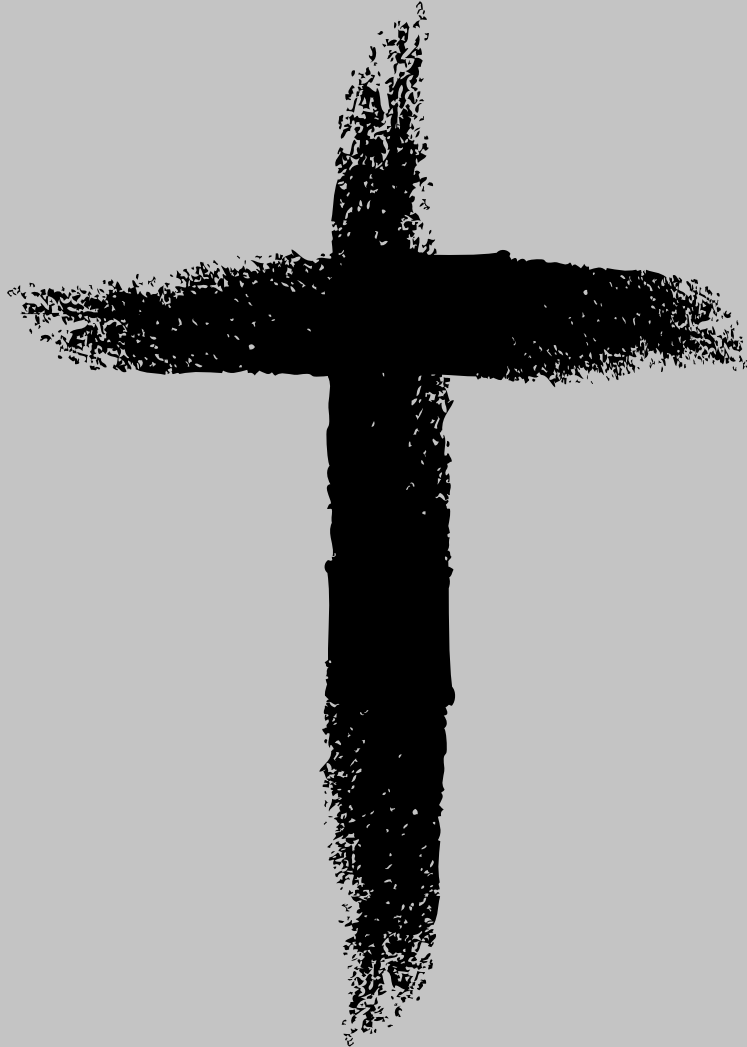


DAY OF REPENTANCE

Book of prayer



What is the significance of repentance?

In the Old Testament, repentance is described using two words. First by the Hebrew word "shuv" (שׁוּב), which means "to return." Second, it is commonly associated with the Hebrew word "nacham" (נָחַם), which means "to feel sorrow."

In the New Testament, repentance is described with the Greek word "metanoia" (μετάνοια), which literally means "after or behind one's mind". *Metanoia* is a compound word describing time and change. In context, the term can be interpreted as the change of one's mind or heart.

For believers in Christ, the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, and we experience godly sorrow and a contrite heart. Because of this, believers turn from their sin and towards Christ. It is then that our hearts and minds are aligned with His. In the act of repentance, we approach our Lord once again and lay down our sins at the foot of the cross, and He is faithful to offer us forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

Traditionally, on Ash Wednesday, worshipers receive a cross of ashes on their forehead that represents their grief for sin and that they belong to Christ. In some cases, when the Ash is applied, the facilitator will say, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust, you shall return". Sometimes (and more importantly), this is followed by "Repent and believe in the Gospel".

Prayer of Repentance & Restoration

Lord Jesus, I'm tired of the sin struggle in my life. I feel distant from You. My choices have not led me into the right places. I've listened to the whispers of my enemy instead of Your words in Scripture, and the result has been disastrous.

I once walked with you, my heart tender to Your leading. Yet little by little, I exchanged Your truths for temptations and deceit that led me away from You. Instead of taking thoughts captive and confessing them immediately, I allowed them to grow totally out of control. Repentance was not in my vocabulary. Blame, cover-ups, or trying to reason and rationalize sin never works. They only give birth to deeper sin entanglements.

You created me in Your own image, Lord. You know my thoughts before I speak them. You x-ray my heart and see through my excuses and intentions. Your Spirit warned me, but I ignored You. Disappointment and discouragement have taken their toll on me.

So today I'm confessing my desperate need for You. You have promised that if we will confess our sin, You will forgive us and make us clean again. Lord, I truly need Your forgiveness. Repentance is on my heart and lips. I want to turn around and head in another direction—back to You, Lord. But I need Your help.

Just as You created the world out of nothing, Lord, create a clean heart out of my "nothingness." You paid for my sin with your own death. Restore my life and the fellowship we once shared together. You don't condemn me, and You won't disown me; I am Your child forever. But I take all the blame—I own my own sin. I am the one who broke fellowship with You and am crushed over the way I treated You and Your name.

Lord, root out the darkness and light up my life with Your holy presence. Help me understand what went wrong. Show me how my destructive patterns first began. What did I allow to become more important than loving and honouring You? Why did I seek satisfaction in others or other things than You? You are the only One Who provides all my needs. You fill up the soul with deep-down joy and peace beyond all understanding.

Lord, may your restoration include new boundaries around my life. I can't flirt with sin and not be hurt. In restoring me, teach me how to say no again to things that could harm myself or my testimony. If my actions have wounded others, show me where and to whom I need to ask forgiveness or how to make amends. Help me to surround myself with positive encouragers who will hold me accountable and who will speak the truth in love. Truly, shame melts away and we are healed when we confess to others and ask for their help.

I understand that my repentance won't eliminate the consequences of my sin. Knowing that You don't hold our sins to our account—You remember them no more--and that You place them as far as the east is from the west both humbles me and fills me with amazement and gratitude. No consequence could ever be as painful as knowing how my sin hurt You or how You suffered for me out of love. Your crucifying death gave me eternal life with You. Lord, You place grace next to my regrets and give me hope for a new future.

Thank You, Lord, that sin does not disqualify us. Instead, like a runner who has fallen but who gets up again, I, too, am willing to start again and finish the race You have set for me.

With Your restoration, Lord, perhaps I can help others find their way back to You again. I will not give my enemy the victory. Instead, I will accept Yours. Instead of a meltdown, with Your help I will allow Your Spirit to give me a hot heart for You, one that seeks You and wants to live for You the rest of my life. Thank You, Jesus, for Your sweet forgiveness and promised restoration. Amen.

What should I do after I participate in this event?

First, it is essential to acknowledge and rest in the Lord. He provides us with real and lasting hope, peace of mind and blessed assurance.

Second, it is important to acknowledge that you are forgiven and respond to this truth by reconciling with others who have wronged you and seeking forgiveness from those you have wronged.

Finally, take some time to meditate on how you might respond to God's grace through acts of worship and devotion. Try journaling some ideas of how you can practically incorporate worship into your daily life.

We have provided some good ideas below:

- Commit yourself to the study of God's word. *Lectio Divina* is a traditional monastic practice of scripture reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and increase knowledge of God's word. This qualitative approach interacts with the scriptures as living and active,
- Attend the Concert of Prayer event. We are hosting one on the last day of the Week of Pursuit on February 16th. This gathering will include worship in song, prayer, and communion.
- Help a neighbour in need. Servanthood is a transformative and fulfilling act of worship where we can grow in Christlikeness.

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints." -1 Thess 3:12-13

