



February 17, 2021

Today is Ash Wednesday, a day of trusted ritual to begin the season of Lent.

You can join our peaceful, 20-minute worship service for Ash Wednesday [HERE](#).

Ashes are a symbol of repentance and a recognition of our mortality. From my own experience, I can confirm that repentance and a recognition of mortality go hand in hand.

We live in a culture that is mostly uncomfortable with discussions of dying. We find it hard to talk about death. But dying is a part of being human, and I remember the wisdom of Mr. Rogers, who said that “anything that’s human is mentionable. And anything that is mentionable can be more manageable.”



About fifteen years ago, surviving a car accident made me confront the fragility of life and my own mortality. I was driving by myself on the interstate in the mountains of West Virginia when I drove into a heavy summer rainstorm, and my car hydroplaned and spun 180 degrees so that I was moving back-first when I hit the guardrail and came to an abrupt stop. The trunk and back seat of the car were crumpled, but the front of the car, where I was sitting, remained unharmed. I didn’t have a single scratch.

After the totaled car had been hauled away, and Betsy arrived to bring me home, my brush with mortality created a sense of repentance. Repentance means to turn around. I think of repentance as giving up a lesser way of life in order to embrace a fuller, more loving and fulfilled way of life. And that is exactly what I experienced. Aware of the preciousness of life, I was moved to say the important things that I had to say to the people I loved. I found deep reservoirs of motivation to make a difference in the world.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
But today you live.

Peace,

Rev. Matthew Wooster
Senior Minister