

an illustrated  
labyrinth meditation

ASH WEDNESDAY





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Published by Illustrated Ministry, LLC, Racine, Wisconsin.

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## AN ILLUSTRATED LABYRINTH MEDITATION: ASH WEDNESDAY

Welcome to *An Illustrated Labyrinth Meditation: Ash Wednesday*. Our Illustrated Labyrinth Meditations are meant to be reflective, colored in, or doodled and drawn on. Christians have used the labyrinth as a means to have a multi-sensory expression of prayer and contemplation. A labyrinth may look like a maze, but it is quite different. The labyrinth isn't meant to be confusing, but instead provides space and time to reflect and pray while traveling the path.

As we enter into the season of Lent, we invite you to focus intentionally on the spiritual disciplines of almsgiving, prayer, fasting, and storing treasures. This simple, meditative resource includes an illustrated labyrinth, a meditation on a scripture passage, space to journal, and a short prayer that can help set your intentions for Lent. An Illustrated Labyrinth Meditation: Ash Wednesday was designed to be used for personal reflection, intergenerationally, by youth groups or adult studies.

As you use this resource in your ministry or your home, we would love to hear what was helpful and meaningful and what suggestions or comments you have for us. We desire to create quality resources for faith formation, and we appreciate your comments and feedback. You can always reach us at [info@illustratedministry.com](mailto:info@illustratedministry.com) or find us on the following social networks:

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We also love to see photos and hear stories about how you are using our products. When you post photos or comments online, please use the hashtag #anillustratedlent or tag us in the photos so we can see them. That allows us to be part of the conversation and you to be part of our online community. Additionally, checking the hashtag on various social networks is a great way to get to see how other families and churches are creatively using our resources.

Blessings on your Lenten journeys!

The Illustrated Ministry Team

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## BACKGROUND

Ash Wednesday is the day in the church year where we mark the beginning of the season of Lent. During this season, we are all invited to reflect on the things in our lives that may be causing us to be distant from God and distant from others. Beginning around the 11th century, the Ash Wednesday service became a way for Christians to physically mark and remember the beginning of the season.

Historically, during the service, ashes are prepared from the palm fronds used during the Palm Sunday of the prior year as a way to point toward the Gospel message of the upcoming Easter. The ashes are mixed with oil and placed with the sign of the cross on the foreheads of the service participants and the words, "From dust you have come and to dust you will return," are shared with each person. This can be a startling statement to hear. However, the purpose is not to alarm but to remind us that we have been created by God and that it is God who holds us in life and in death.



Perhaps it is because of our increasingly virtual world, Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent become powerful opportunities to reconnect with our families, friends, our faith communities, and most importantly our Creator. The scent of the oil, the scratch of the ashes, and the sound of song and Word all provide us with different ways to feel and understand the significance of the season.

# DIRECTIONS

*For this meditation, we will use the labyrinth page, the scripture refrain page, the Intentions for Lent page, and ashes or black paint.*

## **For Individual Use**

Please sit at a table or other flat surface. Place the labyrinth in the middle of the table or surface. Near the paper, have prepared ashes or black paint available for use and the scripture refrain page. Place your finger at the entrance of the labyrinth. Read through the first scripture, then move your finger through the labyrinth. When you reach the center, dip your thumb in the ashes or paint. Then make the sign of the cross in the middle of the labyrinth.

Say the refrain: From dust you came and to dust you will return. As you trace your way back out of the labyrinth, reflect on the scripture passage, and notice any intentions that come to mind that you may want to set for this Lenten season. Repeat with the rest of the scripture passages. When you finish your journey, write out your intentions, and say the prayer.

## **For Communal Use**

If you are using this with a group, designate one or more readers of the scripture passage, Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21. Gather around a table or other flat surface. Place the labyrinth in the middle of the table or surface. Near the paper, have prepared ashes or black paint available for use and the scripture refrain page. Invite each person in your group to use their finger to "journey through the labyrinth." If your group has more than 4, invite two participants to journey the labyrinth together. Start by placing one finger at the entrance of the labyrinth, and when the reader begins to read the scripture, move your finger slowly through.

When each participant reaches the center of the labyrinth, the participant will then dip their thumb in the ashes or paint and make the sign of the cross in the middle of the labyrinth. Together all will say the refrain: From dust you came and to dust you will return.

Pause between each of the four breaks after the refrains as the participant finishes tracing their finger through the rest of the labyrinth. When you finish your journeys, you may complete the activity by setting any intentions for Lent and closing with the prayer.



# SCRIPTURE & LABYRINTH REFRAIN: MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

## Concerning Almsgiving

Reader: Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

## Refrain

Together: From dust you came and to dust you will return.

## Concerning Prayer

Reader: And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

## Refrain

Together: From dust you came and to dust you will return.

## Concerning Fasting

Reader: And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

## Refrain

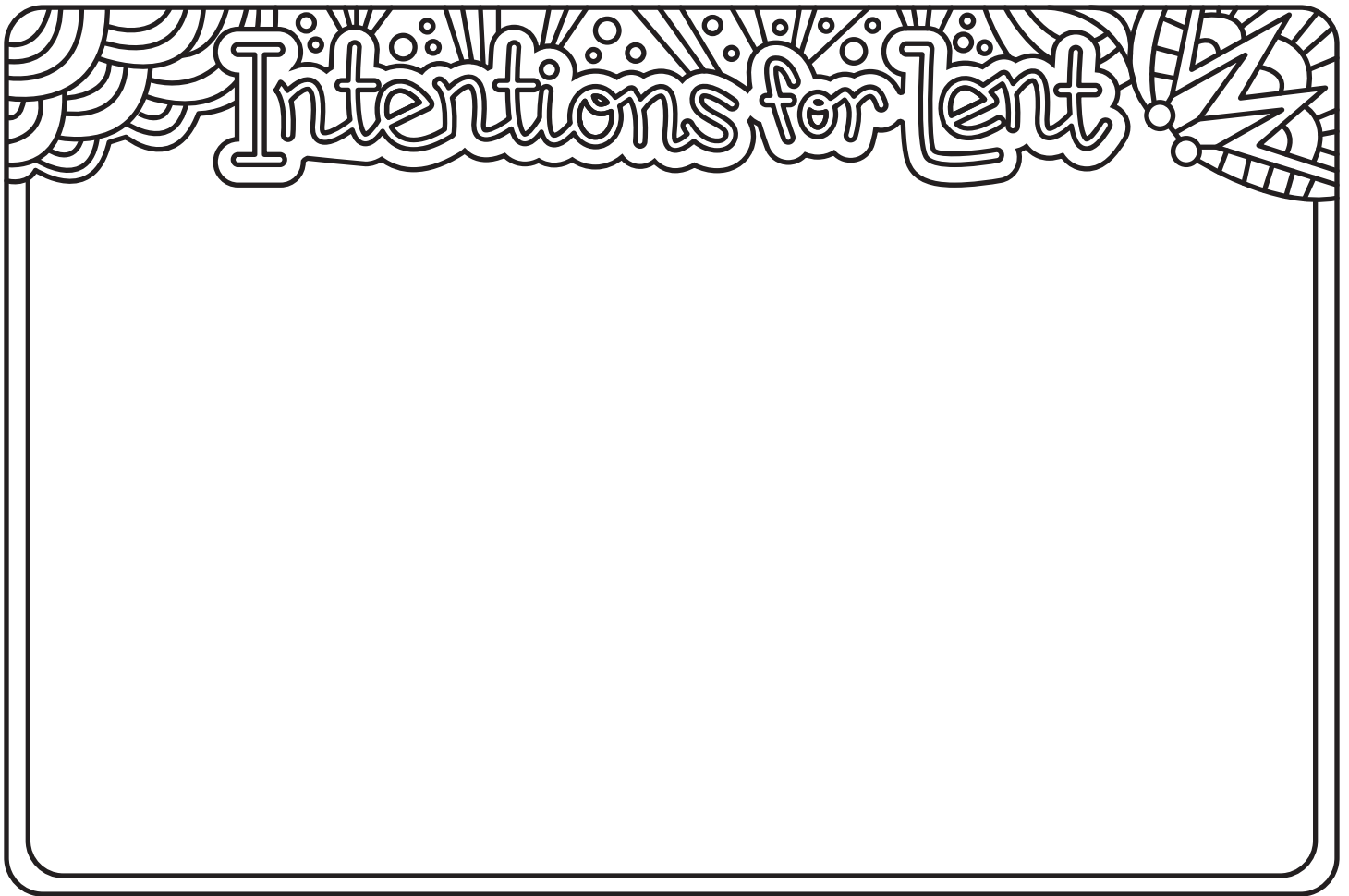
Together: From dust you came and to dust you will return.

## Concerning Treasures

Reader: Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

## Refrain

Together: From dust you came and to dust you will return.



## PRAYER

Dear God of our whole selves,  
As we journey through this season of Lent,  
teach us how to give,  
so that we can joyfully respond when you call us to serve.  
Teach us how to pray,  
so that we can be closer to you in all that we do throughout the day.  
Teach us how to let go,  
so nothing can stand in the way of our connection with you.  
Teach us how to prepare,  
so we can be ready to receive your love, wisdom, and blessing.  
Help us to remember that in all ways we belong to you,

**Amen.**

Journey through the  
**LABYRINTH**





## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**JESSICA HAUSER BRYDON** is a school social worker and an ordained minister in the PC(USA). Her passion is helping create opportunities for safety, connection, and growth for both children and adults. She resides in Grand Haven, Michigan with her clergy spouse and three children.

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## ABOUT THE EDITOR

**REBEKAH LOWE**, a local of Kansas City, Southern California, and Austin, TX, earned a B.A. in Biblical Studies with a minor in Leadership Studies and a minor in Hebrew at Azusa Pacific University and served as the Director of Children's Ministry at Brentwood Presbyterian Church (USA) in Los Angeles, California, for over five years. She resides in Austin, TX with her husband and their two daughters.

## ABOUT ILLUSTRATED MINISTRY'S FOUNDER

**ADAM WALKER CLEVELAND** is an artist, pastor, pastor's spouse, and father of four (two living). Adam graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Youth Ministry. As an ordained Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA), Adam has served churches in Idaho, California, Oregon and Illinois. After doing youth ministry for over 15 years, Adam founded Illustrated Ministry, LLC in 2015. Adam lives with his family in southeastern Wisconsin.