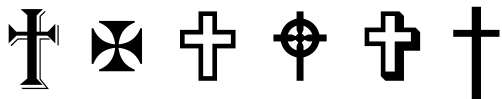


THE LENTEN JOURNEY

The Lenten journey from the ashes of death to resurrected life begins on the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, which signifies a time to turn around, to change directions, to repent. This first day of Lent reminds us that unless we are willing to die to our old selves, we cannot be raised to new life with Christ. The first step of this journey calls us to acknowledge and confront our mortality, individually and corporately. In many traditions, this is symbolized through the imposition of ashes — placing a cross on one's forehead. During the imposition of ashes the words: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19) are repeated again and again. We are to remember that we are but temporary creatures, always on the edge of death. On Ash Wednesday, we begin our Lenten trek through the desert toward Easter.

Ashes on the forehead is a sign of our humanity and a reminder of our mortality. Lent is not a matter of being good, and wearing ashes is not to show off one's faith. The ashes are a reminder to us and our communities of our finite creatureliness. The ashes we wear on our Lenten journey symbolize the dust and broken debris of our lives as well as the reality that eventually each of us will die.

Trusting in the "accomplished fact" of Christ's resurrection, however, we listen for the Word of God in the time-honored stories of the church's Lenten journey. We follow Jesus into the wilderness, resist temptation, fast, and proceed "on the way" to Jerusalem and the cross. Our Lenten journey is one of *metanoia* ("turning around"), of changing directions from self-serving toward the self-giving way of the cross.



www.locustpresbyterian.org

LOCUST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

March 5, 2024



Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession and contrition.

Acknowledging that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, we stand in solidarity as fellow creatures before our Creator, acutely aware of our mortality. In the face of our transience, we pledge ourselves anew to live unto God's Word in Jesus Christ, the eternal Word that remains forever.

Locust Presbyterian Church

7:00pm Ash Wednesday Worship

*Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return,
but the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever.*

Welcome and words about Ash Wednesday Rev.Skidmore

Call To Worship:

ONE: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;

ALL: According to your abundant mercy blot out my transgression

ONE: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity

ALL: And cleanse me from my sin.

ONE: O Lord, open my lips,

ALL: And my mouth will declare your praise.

ALL: Let us bring our praises to you alone, O God our strength and our Savior.

Hymn: #78 “Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed” vs. 1 & 2

Call to Confession: Rev. Skidmore

Prayer of Confession: (unison)

Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us. We have many treasures on earth that we hold too dearly; that we withhold from others in need. When we sin against neighbor, condone injustice, and quarrel with one another, we sin against you. Forgive us Lord, blot out our transgression, fill us with your grace and pour your mercy over us. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and give us a new and right spirit.

Assurance of Forgiveness

First Reading: Psalm 51:1-17

Hymn: #85 “What Wondrous Love Is This”

Second Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Third Reading: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Message – “Humble Hearts”

Rev. Ardy Skidmore

Invitation to Lent

ONE: Jesus, Lamb of God

MANY: Have mercy on us

ONE: Jesus, bearer of our sin,

MANY: Have mercy on us

ONE: Jesus, redeemer of the world,

MANY: Grant us peace

Imposition of Ashes

Nailing to the cross

Prayer

Exit in Silence to gather outside



Imposition of Ashes

(About Ashes... as humble people, we can recognize our “mortality”- that the body will die someday. As responsive people, we show our repentance with a sign of Gospel acceptance. Ash Wednesday is one day each year when we can be bold to consider our sin, seek forgiveness, and find new ways of spiritual growth and living. The sign of ashes is “sacramental,” as an outward reminder of our humility, and our dependence upon Christ’s mercy and grace.)

