

ash wednesday

cliff's comments

by Pastor Cliff Akerman
interim senior pastor

February 17

worship services:

12:00 noon
(lunch follows)

7:30 pm

Worship on Ash Wednesday includes the imposition of ashes, a practice which many congregations have found to be a very meaningful part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy. Using ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in scripture. The early Christians adopted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence.

In the Ash Wednesday liturgy, the confession and imposition of ashes follow the proclamation of the Word of God in biblical readings, sermon, and song. This confession marks the beginning of a season of penitence called Lent. At the conclusion of the Ash Wednesday confession and imposition of ashes, a declaration of grace is used, coupled with a plea for mercy. At the close of worship, the assembly leaves in silence.

Thoughts about Lent: A young pastor said, "I'm going to be original or nothing." It soon became apparent that the young pastor was both. Not wishing to be compared to that young pastor but with a desire to comment on the liturgical season of Lent, I decided to share the following comments from "Sundays and Seasons." Portions encased in () are my additions.

"Lent starts (on February 17). Get ready for six weeks of dreary music and feeling sad.' It was not that many years ago when some of us would hear that type of remark. Maybe you still do. It is not surprising, really, when we consider the cultural images and most common question regarding the season: 'What are you giving up for Lent?'...Isn't all this seriousness a bit of a put-on?

"It may help to remember...that the very word 'Lent' comes from an Old English word for spring, and the purpose of repentance is the renewal of our baptismal identities – individually, but also as a community. 'Feeling sad' is neither here nor there, but repentance, turning around and starting anew...gives...a deeper meaning." (Spring, even here in the heart of Texas, ushers in a season of renewal and newness. There is a "spring break" appointed to emerge from the bleaker days of winter and to refresh ourselves for brighter days that energize us.)

(The value of a time of renewal is to consider

the good things of our Christian faith and to build up our faith by practicing some of the spiritual disciplines. These are not downers, but they are intended to enliven our understanding of God's love and intent for us. Among these spiritual disciplines are prayer, fasting, sabbath time, scripture reading and study, and works of charity. We will promote these disciplines during our five mid-week gatherings. It is my hope that we will give ourselves the time to consider these things – not as intrusions interrupting or complicating our already busy lives but as means to give spiritual value to all we have to contend with in our busy lives.)

(Yes, we do begin Lent with a reminder of our mortality and conclude in remembrance of Jesus' sacrificial end to His earthly mission; but we know that Easter is just around the corner. The spiritual disciplines of Lent give us opportunities to celebrate daily renewals and resurrections in our lives.)

(It is my hope that this year's season of Lent will produce positive effects in our lives. Sadness, sorrow and guilt are not the intentions. Renewal and new starts are the intentions. May the good Lord generate positive perspectives in our lives.)

Thank you for your continued participation in the life and mission available in and through Lord of Life Lutheran Church.

Pastor Cliff



our lenten journey

This year our Lenten journey begins on Ash Wednesday, which is February 17. Ash Wednesday is the Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter and the first day of Lent. This day is named for the practice of imposing ashes, a practice which many Lutheran congregations have found to be a very meaningful part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy.

Using ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in the Bible (see Jonah 3:5-9, Job 42:6 and Matthew 11:21). The early Christians adopted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence.

Ashes symbolize several aspects of our human existence:

- Ashes remind us of God's condemnation of sin, as God said to Adam, "Dust you are and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).
- Ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. They were used anciently in the absence of soap. On Ash Wednesday ashes are a penitential substitute for water as a reminder of our baptism.
- Ashes remind us of the shortness of human life, for it is said as we are buried: "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."
- Ashes are a symbol of our need to repent, confess our sins, and return to God.

In the Ash Wednesday liturgy the confession and imposition of ashes follow the proclamation of the Word of God in biblical readings,

sermon, and song. The confession marks the beginning of a season of penitence.

It is during this season of Lent that we observe a time of preparation, 40 days leading to the Easter celebration. The forty days of Lent recall the 40 day fast of Jesus in the wilderness after his baptism and Moses' 40 day fast on Mount Sinai.

The principal themes of Lent are penitence, baptismal renewal, prayer, fasting and service. As it is a penitential time, the color of the season is purple. It is also a season of simplicity. Some congregations do not adorn their chancels or altars with flowers at this time. The "Alleluia" in the liturgy is not used to reflect these principal themes.

It is not all doom and gloom, though! It was not long ago when hymns and songs that referred to the passion and crucifixion were the only ones used. The readings for each week provide a much richer tapestry of themes and images than that, and the major, overall theme of Lent is one of living more deeply into our personal and corporate baptismal identity. So not all assembly song needs to be in minor keys!

So take this time to live in the moments of Lent. Adopt a spiritual discipline. It doesn't have to be "giving up" something, although fasting is a meaningful practice for some. Consider adding daily prayer or serving others as an alternative discipline. Whatever you choose to observe during this season, may it enrich your Lenten journey.

Pam Tamburello

lenten devotionals

Open your heart and mind during the Lenten season with a daily devotion. Devotionals are available for your use at the Faith Formation table in the Fellowship Hall.

educational and family events

Pastor's Bible Study

Tuesday mornings - 10:00 am

Ladies Bible Study

Wednesday mornings - 9:30 am

Children's Music Program

Wednesdays - 5:00 pm

Word on Wednesday (WOW)

Wednesdays - 6:00 pm

Faith Alive (7th & 8th Graders)

Wednesdays - 6:10 pm

Confirmation/MWM

Wednesdays - 7:00 pm

Sunday School for all ages

Sunday mornings - 9:45 am

Baptism Anniversary Recognition

2nd Sunday of each Month

Ash Wednesday Worship Services

February 17 - 12:00 Noon and 7:00 pm

Mid-week Lenten Worship Services

Wednesday, February 24, March 3, 10, 17, & 24

3rd Grade Bible Presentations

Sunday, February 28

Palm Sunday - March 28

Easter - April 4

Confirmation - May 2

Pig Roast - May 15

VBS - June 21 - 25

Day Camp - August 2 - 6

Oktoberfest - October 16

summer camp

at lutherhill

It isn't too late to register your child for camp at Lutherhill. The Lord of Life kiddos are attending the Yearlings and Youngn's camps scheduled for June 13 through June 18. Register online at Lutherhill.org. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Vicky at vickyroberts@lordoflifeonline.org.

ahoy matey- it's vbs time!

June 21 – June 25

We are getting our sea legs ready to take sail on a High Seas Expedition-Exploring the Mighty Love of God! We need all hands on deck to help prepare our ship for her voyage. We need the talents of those able to create and assemble bulletin boards, folks to help out with registration and many other posts to be filled. Please contact Vicky or Holly Jo in the church office to see how you can help.

Third Grade Bibles

During the Sunday School hour (9:45 – 10:45) on February 7, February 14, and February 21, third graders and their parents will come together to study the Bible with Jackie Gardiner. Classes will be held in the Fellowship Hall. Presentations of these Bibles are during all three services on February 28.

Senior Birthday Party

at Copperwood

On Sunday, February 21, we will be hosting the monthly Senior Birthday Party at Copperwood, located at 4407 S. Panther Creek Drive. We will be meeting at the Copperwood Community Building at 5:45 until 7:00 pm to celebrate February Birthdays, Play Bingo and enjoy some Fellowship with the residents there. We are in need of volunteers to help provide cookies, small gifts (max. \$5), and to join us for a fun time! Please sign up on the sheets located on the Faith Formation Table in the Fellowship Hall.

outreach ministry

Fair Trade: If you bought chocolate or coffee at the Valentines FairTrade Sale February 7, Thanks! It is such a great opportunity to reach out to the greater community of the world and support them in hard work to care for their families. These farmers are also taught how to best take care of their land as well.

Souper Bowl: Food received from the "National Day of Caring" will be given to Interfaith and to the Montgomery Food Bank.

Homeless Teens: If all goes well, Lord of Life will be joining efforts with Tree of Life Lutheran Church (Conroe) to address the issue of Homeless teens. Montgomery County Youth Services recently lost a grant for this program and a huge gap now exists. Pray for this ministry that this need may be met!

Serving Our Seniors: Interfaith's "SERVING Our Seniors" Day is set for March 6. This program helps to keep Seniors in their homes. Teenagers from our church will be participating. If you would like to supervise or assist the youth with painting, light home repair, contact Anne at the church office.

Lutheran World Relief: We have seen the pictures! Lutheran World Relief has been sending health kits, school kits, sewing kits, and the beautiful quilts all over the world for years, and will continue to send them to Haiti, to Thailand, to Georgia (former U.S.S.R). Collections for items to send will start on February 14. Please watch for this and be a part of helping others.

Words of Thanks: Lutheran Social Services of the South's Dan Ziechang writes to us "I offer praise and thanks to God for you and your gift of \$1,000 for Krause Children's Center. We are grateful for your support". **Bethlehem Lutheran Church** in New Orleans writes "We happily accept your gift (of \$1,000) and assure you that these funds will be used to help us continue our ministry here at Bethlehem. Your gift came at a time when there is a great need for it. We celebrate the partnership that exists among us. Thank you so much!" Rev. Dr. Patrick Keen

ladies pampering retreat

March 5-7

Ladies have been coming to Lutherhill to relax and let their hair down for years! So join in this grand tradition March 5-7 at Lutherhill. Bring your bible study group, bunco club (you know you have one) or just bring yourself. This will be a wonderful weekend of fun, fellowship and a reminder of God's Love with a gentle hand on your shoulder of friends new and old.

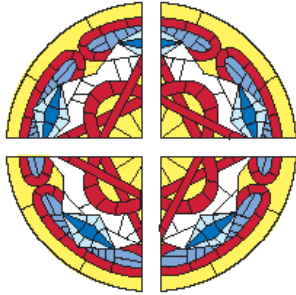
Activities will include Bible study, worship, professional massages, gourmet meals, sunset appetizers and wine Saturday at the Carby Chapel, afternoon sessions including yoga, cooking classes, greening God's creation workshop, high ropes course, labyrinth, and of course just relaxing.

The retreat starts Friday, March 5 at 8:00 pm and ends Sunday, March 7 at 11:00 am. Cost: \$150 includes all lodging, meals, massages, and all programing. Go to www.lutherhill.org to register online or email office@lutherhill.org with any questions.

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Lord of Life Lutheran Church

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www.lordoflifeonline.org

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Kids of the Kingdom Preschool

281-298-9901

*We invite you to join us for
worship on Sundays*

8:30 am	Contemporary Liturgical
9:45 am	Sunday School
9:50 am	New Life Worship
11:00 am	Traditional Worship

Your Church Staff

Rev. Cliff Akerman

Interim Senior Pastor

Rev. Nancy Simpson

Associate Pastor

Pam Tamburello

Interim Director of Music

Lanette Jackson

Director of Finance

Kathy Greer

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