

ASH WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Lent?

English word (stemming from an Anglo-Saxon word for “spring” and related to the English word “lengthen”) that refers to the penitential period preceding Easter. Early Christians felt that the magnitude of the Easter celebration called for special preparation. As early as the second century, many Christians observed several days of fasting as part of that preparation. Over the next few centuries, perhaps in remembrance of Jesus’ fasting for 40 days in the wilderness, 40 days became the accepted length of the Lenten season.

Since, from the earliest years of Christianity, it had been considered inappropriate to fast on the day of the resurrection, Sundays were not counted in the 40 days. Thus, the Wednesday 46 days before Easter came to be regarded as the beginning of Lent.

Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary

Ash Wednesday Prayer

**O God,
maker of every thing and judge of
all that you have made,
from the dust of the earth you have
formed us
and from the dust of death you
would raise us up.**

**By the redemptive power of the
cross,
create in us clean hearts
and put within us a new spirit,
that we may repent of our sins
and lead lives worthy of your
calling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen.

The Ashes

Repent, and believe
the Gospel

Confession and Pardon Prayer

**May the almighty and merciful God,
who desires not the death of a
sinner**

**but that we turn from
wickedness and live,
accept our repentance,
forgive our sins,
and restore us by the Holy Spirit to
newness of life.**

Amen.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Psalm Reading:

Psalm 24

School/Apartment to Pray For:

Harford Technical High School / Apt 301

Devotional Reading:

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

The Season of Lent is a time of preparation leading us from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. During this time we prepare our hearts by looking at our sin (especially on Ash Wednesday) and looking to Jesus for mercy and forgiveness (culminating with His death on a cross on Good Friday and His resurrection on Easter Sunday).

It's the tension of sin and repentance vs mercy and forgiveness that we hold throughout this Season (by the way, mercy and forgiveness always win!). This tension is exemplified in these verses from today's reading:

Joel 2:12-13

'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Psalm Reading:

Psalm 25

School/Apartment to Pray For:

Havre de Grace Elementary School / Apt 302

Devotional Reading:

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Here's the core of what we as Christians believe: We were created to be in a right relationship with God (aka: righteous), but our sin keeps this from being possible. Only nothing is impossible for God, so He made a way through His one and only Son, Jesus Christ! The Son of God came to earth, lived a human but sinless life, and then offered that life as a sacrifice that paid the price for our sins. Here's how the Apostle Paul puts it:

2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Anyone who puts their faith in what Jesus did on the cross is made right with God and can enter into the right relationship with Him that we were all created for! Paul says a few verses later, "now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." If you haven't put your faith in Jesus, please let today be "the day of salvation" for you!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Psalm Reading:

Psalm 26

School/Apartment to Pray For:

Havre de Grace Middle School / Apt 303

Devotional Reading:

Psalm 51:1-17

This passage might be the best in the entire Bible at expressing the terrible feeling that comes with recognizing your own sin, and the pure joy of being forgiven and restored to wholeness by God. If we ask, God forgives. When He forgives, He also forgets. And when He forgets, He washes it away, as white as snow.

Psalm 51:1-2

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Look at all that God does for us, just in these first two verses: He blots out our transgressions, He washes away our iniquity, and He cleanses us from our sin! A few verses later we see that He also restores us: *"Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."*

All we have to do is ask!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Psalm Reading:

Psalm 27

School/Apartment to Pray For:

Havre de Grace High School / Apt 304

Devotional Reading:

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Growing up, the churches we attended did not observe Ash Wednesday or the Season of Lent. I knew plenty of people who did, but the only thing I knew about Lent was that you gave up doing something (fasting) during that time. But I had no idea why. As I've begun to observe this Season over the past ten or so years, I've begun to see the importance of fasting during Lent. The way I see it, Jesus gave up all the amazing things that come with being God and living in heaven to come to earth, be human, live a sinless life, and then offer that life on the cross to pay the price for our sins. My giving up chocolate (or whatever else) for 40 days cannot even come close to what Jesus gave up, but it does give me multiple opportunities each day during Lent to be reminded of Jesus' sacrifice and to stop and give thanks. So as you fast this Season, every time you would do the thing you're fasting from, take a moment to thank Jesus for His sacrifice! But just as the early church found it inappropriate to fast on Sunday, so do we, and so the fast is lifted each Sunday during Lent!

**GRACE
AND
TRUTH
COMMUNITY CHURCH**

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Weekly Schedule:

Tuesday

9:00 AM: Grocery Shopping

**Dianna Tilton collects lists/
payment from 8-9AM**

12:30 PM: Worship Service

Via Zoom

**Gatherings also take place in
various apartments**

Thursday

10:00 AM: Coffee with the Pastor

**Host Apartment varies each
week**