

Transfiguration Sunday to Easter Sunday

Transfiguration

On Transfiguration Sunday, we recall Christ's transfiguration on the mountain with Elijah and Moses as witnessed by Peter, John and James. (Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-10, Luke 9:28-36) Liturgically, observing Transfiguration Sunday on the Last Sunday before Lent allows us an opportunity to "celebrate the revelation of Christ's glory 'before the passion' so that we may 'be strengthened to bear our cross and be changed into his likeness.'" The gospels narrate the Transfiguration as a bridge between Jesus' public ministry and his passion. From the time of the Transfiguration, Jesus sets his face to go to Jerusalem and the cross." (quoted from *Daniel Benedict, The General Board of Discipleship*)

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the 40 day season of Lent. On Ash Wednesday, we address both our mortality and our sin before God. Accordingly, the services are somber. The ashes imposed on the forehead are a sign of repentance for our sins and of the certainty of our own death. As such, they declare visibly our hope in Christ. It is traditional to burn the palm branches from the previous year's Palm Sunday observance to make the ashes. The ashes speak our acknowledgment that we are a sinful, inconstant, mortal people. They also testify to our faith in a loving, constant, eternal God.

Lent

Lent is the Christian season beginning with Ash Wednesday and culminating on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Sunday). It is a 40 day season; Sundays are not included in the calculations, since, for Christians, every Sunday is a "Little Resurrection." The forty days are symbolic of Jesus' preparation in the wilderness after his baptism and before the beginning of his ministry. The word *Lent* is derived from the Anglo Saxon word "Lencten" meaning "spring." Lent began as a time of intense soul searching that included fasting, preparation for baptism and penance. Our Wednesday Lenten worship series reflects that devotion. The colors of the season include purple (purple and signifies repentance, humility and suffering), gray and black.

Some churches use no flowers during Lent, and most omit "Alleluia" from worship. There are many services associated with Lent, including Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday.

Easter Sunday

Spring is full of God's surprises, but the greatest of all God's surprises is Easter, Christ among us forever. Easter is a time of joyous celebration for all creation, especially for God's children in the church, for Easter is a new beginning. It is the symbol of a new relationship with God. Hallelujah!

Ash Wednesday Lenten Services

February 18, 2010

12:00 noon Ash Wednesday Worship Service and Imposition of Ashes in the sanctuary. A soup and sandwich lunch will follow the service in the Wesley Fellowship Hall.

Rev. Jonathan Tompkins **Scripture: Joel 2: 12-27; Matthew 6: 16-18** **Sermon: "Return to Me**

6:15 PM Imposition of Ashes Service in the Thomas N. Brittain Center on the North Campus.

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday – March 28

~ Each worship service will begin with the processional led by children carrying palm branches.
~ The Wesley Chancel Choir will present: "Behold! God's Holy Lamb" during worship.

Maundy Thursday—April 1, 7:30 PM

A Service of Holy Communion and Stripping of the Altar

Good Friday—April 2, at Noon

This is a service of readings and meditation.

Easter Sunday—April 4

Sunrise Service at Plyler Park at 6:30 AM
Worship Services at 8:30, 9:45, and 11:00 AM
Sunday School at 9:45

"The Living Cross"

Everyone is invited to bring flowers before the Easter services of worship and Sunday School to place on the cross which will be located on the front lawn of First UMC. This cross symbolizes our faith in the Risen Lord. A volunteer will assist.

Lenten Study Opportunities

Twenty-four hours that changed the world. Thursday evening after sunset through Friday the “journey to the crucifixion” occurs. Adam Hamilton helps lead us through the events to the cross. Join us as we study this time that changed the world. *Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. at the North Campus or Thursday mornings at 10:30 in the parlor at the Downtown Campus.* **Please sign up so we’ll know you are planning to attend.** (call church office @ 448-7164)

February 24 and 25 – The Last Supper

March 3 and 4 – The Garden of Gethsemane and Jesus, Barabbas and Pilate

March 17 and 18 – The Torture and Humiliation of the King

March 24 and 25 – The Crucifixion

Lenten Crosses

It is now time for our wooden crosses to be placed in our yards to mark the Lenten season as a testimony of our faith. The cross is to be draped with a purple cloth. Purple reminds us of our sorrow for our sins and of Christ’s majesty.

You may choose to remove the cloth on Maundy Thursday (April 1) and leave the cross bare, a practice that mirrors the church’s tradition of stripping the altar on Maundy Thursday.

On Good Friday, April 2, change the cloth to black to recall the anguish of the Crucifixion.

On Easter Sunday, April 4, joyfully change the cloth to white. White celebrates Christ’s holiness and our joy.

New cloths are available in the church office.

If you would like a wooden cross,

please contact Terry in the church office 448-7164.

Easter Egg Hunt

The annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on the North Campus, Saturday **March 27, 2010** from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Families are encouraged to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy on the grounds following this event.

Palm Sunday Choir Program

The Wesley Chancel Choir of First Church will present a program during worship on Palm Sunday.

The program this year will be: “Behold! God’s Holy Lamb”

The children’s choirs will offer special music and a procession of palms to begin the service.

2010 Lenten Offering

Benefits: Stop Hunger Now

Stop Hunger Now is a 501(c)(3) non-profit international relief organization that coordinates and distributes food and other life-saving aid around the world. The fortified rice-soy meals have a shelf life of three to five years and are prepared with boiling water. First Church has packaged more than 40,000 meals for relief in Africa and Haiti in the past few months and with the ongoing support of the membership, will continue to assist with this vital ministry.

Tithes and Offerings

Lent is a time many people give up things. Tithes and offerings must not be among those items. Please check your record of giving and make sure you are up-to-date. There are many ministries dependent upon faithful, regular, timely giving. A weekly report is given in the Steeple to help us all “stay on track.” Thank you for your support.