

March 2014

Monthly Newsletter of The Church of The Holy Cross
Melville

In This Issue

Lent Begins.....pgs1&2
Collect.....pg2
Lent Begins Cont.....pg2
Say Sorry.....pg3
Services & Jumble.....pg4

Mark Your Calendar

5th, 12th, 19th, 26th,
10.30am mainly music

6th, 13th, 20th, 27th,
4.00pm Kids Plus+

6th
7.30pm Order of St Luke's

8th
8.30am Jumble

10th
1.00pm MU Australia

Lent Begins..... with Ash Wednesday

ASH WEDNESDAY – mourning our sins

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. But why 'Ash' Wednesday? The reason has to do with getting things right between you and God, and the tradition goes right back to the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites often sinned. When they finally came to their senses, and saw their evil ways as God saw them, they could do nothing but repent in sorrow. They mourned for the damage and evil they had done.

Continued on page 2...

The Collect for Ash Wednesday is:

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Continued from Page 1

As part of this repentance, they covered their heads with ashes. For the Israelites, putting ashes on your head, and even rending your clothes, was an outward sign of their heart-felt repentance and acknowledgement of sin. (See Genesis 18:27; 2 Samuel 13:19; Job 2:8, 30:19; Isaiah 58:5; Jeremiah 6:26; Jonah 3:6)

In the very early Christian Church, the yearly 'class' of penitents had ashes sprinkled over them at the beginning of Lent. They were turning to God for the first time, and mourning their sins. But soon many other Christians wanted to take part in the custom, and to do so at the very start of Lent. They heeded Joel's call to 'rend your hearts and not your garments' (Joel 2:12-19). Ash Wednesday became known as either the 'beginning of the fast' or 'the day of the ashes'.

The collect for today goes back to the Prayer Book, and stresses the penitential character of the day. It encourages us with the reminder of the readiness of God to forgive us and to renew us.

The Bible readings for today are often Joel 2:1-2, 12 – 18, Matthew 6: 1-6, 16 – 21 and Paul's moving catalogue of suffering, "as having nothing and yet possessing everything." (2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10)

The actual custom of 'ashing' was abolished at the Reformation, though the old name for the day remained. Today, throughout the Anglican Church, receiving the mark of ashes on one's forehead is optional. Certainly the mark of ashes on the forehead reminds people of their mortality: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return..." (Genesis 3:19)

The late medieval custom was to burn the branches used on Palm Sunday in the previous year in order to create the ashes for today.



Lent. ... a good time to admit you are sorry

Have you done something which haunts you? Which makes you feel restless and defensive, every time you think of it?

Why not deal with it this month, and put it behind you?

Whatever your mistake has been, consider what the Bible has to say to you:

'I have not come to call the virtuous but sinners to repentance' (said Jesus). (Luke 5.32)

'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55.7)

'Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.' (Joel 2:12-13)

God is inviting you to come to him this Ash Wednesday. What a wonderful offer! Make the most of it, and remember how the prodigal son was welcomed back by his compassionate father.

Pilgrimage

Our Rector Revd. Debbie is away on pilgrimage to the Holy Lands from March 9th until the second week of April. Debbie & Wayne will be travelling through Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Turkey. During this time the Sunday services will be led by The Revd. Lynne Eastoe and the Wednesday morning service of prayer will be led by our Lay Pastoral Minister Mrs Jill Bowman. Please hold Revd. Debbie & Wayne in your prayers.

In Loving Memory

Jason Sims

Lindsay Dagg

John Worrall

Jumble Sale

We are always seeking good quality clean items to sell at our Jumble Sales, our next one is on March 8th. Clothes, toys, household items and bric a brac always gratefully received (we regret that we cannot sell electrical items)

We are also seeking kind donations of any retro items from bygone eras, especially the 60's, 70's and 80's. These are being collected for a special sale that we are having later this year. Please bring along to the church on a Wednesday or Sunday morning or phone Rev Debbie 0417178688 to make alternative arrangements. Thank you.

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Services & Readings

Sunday 2nd 9.00am Holy Communion

Exodus 24:12-18, 2 Peter 1:16-21,
Matthew 17:1-9

Wed. 5th

9.30am Holy Communion

7.30pm Ash Wednesday Communion

Sunday 9th 9.00am Holy Communion

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7, Romans 5:12-19,
Matthew 4:1-11

Wed. 12th 9.30am Morning Prayer

Sunday 16th 9.00am Holy Communion

Genesis 12:1-4a, Romans 4:1-5, 13-17,
John 3:1-17

Wed. 19th 9.30am Morning Prayer

Sunday 23rd 9.00am Holy Communion

Exodus 17:1-7, Romans 5:1-11, John 4:5-42

Wed. 26th 9.30am Morning Prayer

Sunday 30th 9.00am Holy Communion

(Mothering Sunday) Exodus 2:1-10, 2
Corinthians 1:3-7, Luke 2:33-35

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