

Ash Wednesday

March 5, 2014



*This statue, located in the Biblical Gardens of the IBEX Campus in Yad HaShmona Israel, depicts the text in Joel 2: “Rend your hearts...”

***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.***

Joel 2:13

Responsive Call to Worship

The season of Lent calls us to journey along the edge,
to anticipate that final trip to Jerusalem.

**Lent calls us to the cutting edge,
when the wheat falls to the ground and new life comes forth.**

Lent not only calls us to give up something, but also
invites us to participate in the mystery of God-with-us.

**Through God's grace,
we are called from grief into gladness, despair into hope,
estrangement into right relations with each other and with the earth.**

So come apart from the busyness of family and work,
and dwell in the presentness of God,
source and ground of our being.

**Through God's grace,
we are called to renew ourselves and our life's purpose
as we gather with others who are searching.**

Worship Song: "Come to Jesus"

People of the God of ages,
Welcome to your brand new day.
Leave the world and all its trappings,
Come into amazing grace.
Let go your every fear;
There is only mercy here.

Chorus

Come to Jesus,
Hope that frees us,
Life that breathes in us.
Come to Jesus,
And believe that He is love.
Oh, come. Oh, come.

All who walk alone in shadow,
All who stand with faith assured,
Those who follow with abandon,
Those who long for something more,
These are the gifts we bring,
Our lives, the offering. (Chorus)

Scripture Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-14

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy hill.
Let all who live in the land tremble,
for the day of the LORD is coming.
It is close at hand—
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness.
Like dawn spreading across the
mountains
a large and mighty army comes,
such as never was of old
nor ever will be in ages to come.

“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.
Who knows? He may turn and relent
and leave behind a blessing—
grain offerings and drink offerings
for the LORD your God.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Meditation



“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you: I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 36:26)



Create in us clean hearts, O God!
Put a new and right Spirit within us!
Don't cast us away or take from us the breath of your life.

Restore to us the joy of your salvation!
Blow the wind of your Spirit into our souls!

You do not desire empty rituals, O God.
You don't want to hear us go through the motions,
offering up repetitious prayers.

What we offer sincerely is our broken spirits.
God, take our wounded and repentant hearts,
and make them whole with your love.

Silent Confession/Writing of Sins/Burning of Paper

Poem: *"Ash Wednesday"*

*On my forehead,
A sign of the cross,
Smudged in ash from the fire
That burned down the McMansion of my hubris,
And, with it,
The money I should have given away,
The television I used to numb my senses,
The carpet I should have been called on,
The doors I should have opened to others,
The envelopes I should have used
To send letters of love,
The wise books I shelved prominently
So that others would think I had read them,
The blank places in my photo albums
Where my darker moments should have been remembered,
The calendars where visits with the people who needed me most
Should have been scheduled,
The couch of my complacency,
The lounge-chair of my laziness,
The shirts I stuffed with my pride,
The moccasins I should have traded with others
So we could have walked miles in them.*

*On my forehead,
A sign of the crossroad
Where I can turn from the way of ruin
To the way of life.*



Worship Song: "Your Love Will Find Me"

You were there when life began,
Spoken words became a man,
Formed in love my every part,
You caused the beating of my heart;
You're beside, behind, before;
You surround me; You're everywhere.

You chart the path ahead of me,
Show me all that I can be;
Every moment You are near,
In every step, through every fear;
There is nowhere I can go
To be without You; You're everywhere.

Chorus

Looking to the heavens, You're there,
And in the dark depths of despair,
Even there Your Love will find me;
Knowing that I'm never alone,
Even if Your Hand takes my home
To the other side of the sea,
Your Love will find me.

Precious are Your thoughts to me,
More wonderful than I can see;
As I cannot count the sand,
I cannot count the things You've planned;
But when I wake up everyday
To face the morning
You meet me there, You're everywhere. (Chorus)

Celebration of Holy Communion

Worship Song: "How Great is the Love"

Thank You for the way that You love us,
How You love us.
Thank You for the way You have made us.
We were created for Your pleasure,
For Your presence,
For the glory of Your name.
Thank You for the way that You love us.

Worship Song: "Lead Me To Calvary"

King of my life, I crown Thee now, Thine shall the glory be;
Lest I forget Thy thorn crowned brow, lead me to Calvary.

Refrain

Lest I forget Gethsemane, lest I forget Thine agony;
Lest I forget, O Lord, Thy love for me, lead me to Calvary.

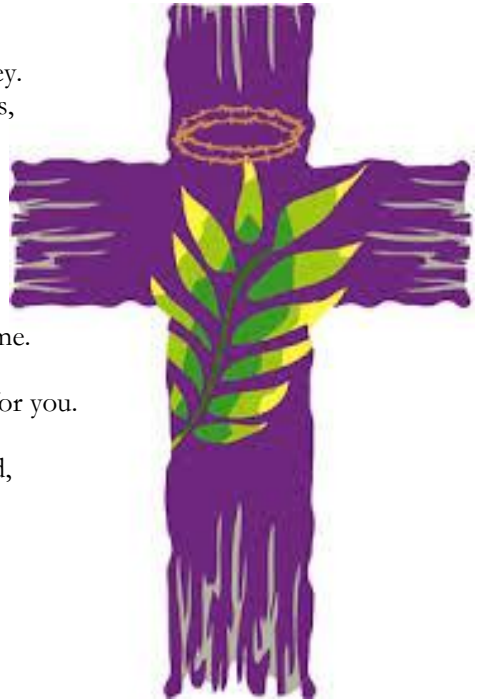
Show me the tomb where Thou wast laid, tenderly mourned and wept;
Angels in robes of light arrayed guarded Thee whilst Thou slept. (Refrain)

May I be willing, Lord, to bear daily my cross for Thee;
Even Thy cup of grief to share, Thou hast borne all for me. (Refrain)

Lest I forget, lest I forget,
Lest I forget, O Lord, thy love for me,
Lead me to Calvary, lead me to Calvary, lead me to Calvary.

Benediction

In the footsteps of centuries of pilgrims,
go now to embark on your Lenten journey.
Consider how you may simplify your days,
so that you may travel lightly.
Be alert to all that could side-track you:
notice that which beckons alluringly,
or with apparently greater urgency,
than the pilgrim journey Christ invites.
Do not try to cover
more than one good day's journey at a time.
Know when to stop for food and sleep,
so that the journey will not be too great for you.
Walk humbly, knowing that the goal
is not recognition, achievement or reward,
but simply to have come to know Christ
and yourself more intimately.
Be on the lookout for other pilgrims,
caring for those who limp, or fall;
those who cannot see the way forward:
pilgrimage is richer in community.
Go now: place your hand
into the outstretched hand of Jesus Christ,
allow the words of the story to guide you,
and pray for purity of heart and mind.



Amen.