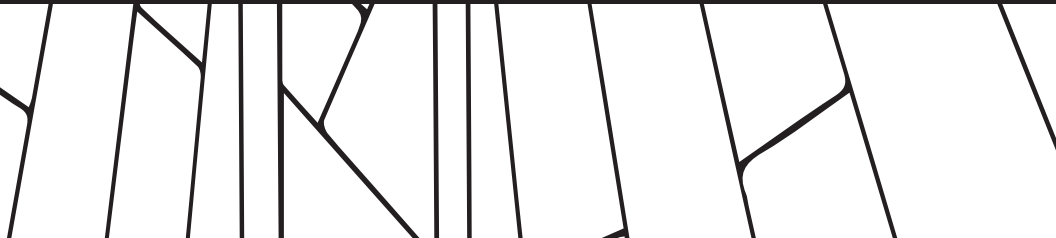


LENT 2018
Ash Wednesday



Ash Wednesday begins our Lenten journey. Over the next 40 days, we will travel a winding path through the Old and New Testaments. Along the way, as we absorb the scenery, and the conversations draw us in, we will be reminded of words of comfort, and words of challenge. And, as it goes with travelers, we will make discoveries and experience surprises. Our destination is to develop life habits that facilitate an ever increasing intimacy with our Heavenly Father. Remember, you are not traveling alone. The Holy Spirit is our guide, and we journey together as a church family.

Let us begin Lent with a Psalm that is foundational to our understanding of God's love.

Reading

*O Lord, you have searched me
and known me!
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.
Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me be night,"
even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is bright as the day,
for darkness is as light with you.
For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully
and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.*

*My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.
How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
If I would count them,
they are more than the sand.
I awake, and I am still with you.
Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God!
O men of blood, depart from me!
They speak against you with malicious intent;
your enemies take your name in vain.
Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord?
And do I not loathe those who
rise up against you?
I hate them with complete hatred;
I count them my enemies.
Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!*

Reflection

What does this Psalm reveal to you about God?

What does this Psalm reveal about you?

Say something truthful to God about yourself:

What do you sense God inviting you to this Lent?

Prayer

