

Ash Wednesday 2007

Sacred Space for the staff of the UCA Synod Office

Welcome to this sacred space.

*There are different stations placed around the room -
please move around them at your own pace.*

*There is no right or wrong way to participate, and you can
stay as long as you would like.*

Entry point:

[computer showing video loop of leaves blowing across a
road; ripped transparent paper with the words to Psalm 103:
13-16]

Ash Wednesday marks our entry into the journey of Lent.

**At the heart of this day is a reminder of the simplest and
yet most difficult reality: that God is God, and we are
not.**

--

**Before you enter into the space, take a moment to slow
down...**

read the bible passage...

(breathe...)

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Station 1:

[leaves loop on dvd, cast iron bowl, trivet, matches,
charcoal, incense resin]

**Even if we know that our life is finite, mortal
we often wish for some part of us to stay alive -
some achievement or success
a mark that we were here.**

**On Ash Wednesday we come face to face with the reality that
all that we are, and all we can do, fades in the light of
the love that exists before us, beyond us, in spite of us...**

**[and the fear that reality brings is a sign of our
humanity;
the liberation it brings is the beginning of our
faithfulness]**

**Place some of the incense onto the charcoal... and with it
place your desire for success, permanence and immortality...**

Let it be burnt to ashes.

Station 2:

[photographic images from the news, burnt on the edges
sitting in tray of ashes, small plastic bags of ashes]

**We live in a world where too many people's dreams of
justice and peace lie in ashes.**

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The call of faith is to take on the struggle for justice and peace for those who no longer can.

What does that call cost you?
What holds you back?

Take some of the ashes with you to carry during Lent. Let them remind you of those who need us to act for justice and peace.

Station 3:

[black card covered in layer of ashes, skewer]

If you have been marked too many times by ashes this year

if you need no more reminders of life's mortality
or of the impermanence of dreams and hard fought
ideals,

if you have learnt too well the lessons of fragility
and preciousness,

if the only prayer you can muster is 'enough',

write your protest into the ashes here.

Station 4:

[bread and wine sitting in ashes.]

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On Ash Wednesday we stand at the edge of the Lenten journey into the wilderness.

Perhaps the wilderness is already your home.

Perhaps standing here is no act of faith
[at least, not of your choosing]:
the wilderness just grew around you
until everywhere you looked
it was.

If the purpose of entering this wilderness, this journey of lent,
is to be stripped back to nothing,
perhaps it feels like you have already arrived at its destination

left only with uncertainty
and disillusionment
and the cold ashes of dreams that once burnt fierce
with faith's passion.

If you can, stop and rest here a while.

If you would like, take some food for the journey.

Station 5:

[bowl of ashes mixed with oil]

If, this Ash Wednesday, you do not feel worthy to carry the blessing of the one who is all love and justice and hope make a sign of the cross on the back of your hand with the ashes.

Carry the mark with you today as a reminder that your worthiness is never part of God's equation.

