

## Where Two or More are Gathered – Lent Year A - 2023

Resources gathered by: Rev. Sean Bell – Luther College.

### Introduction:

Happy lent? Well... happy is perhaps the wrong greeting. It's an awkward and honest season. Lent looks squarely into the parts of life that are full of despair and brokenness. Good news: off the mountain of transfiguration Jesus walks through the darkest valleys to the heart of cultural and political power to the last supper, the garden, the trial, the cross, the tomb, and onto resurrection. These Lenten days prepare us for a Holy Week and then 50 days of Easter.

### Seasonal Notes:

A great resource for all Church Seasons is the book "Keeping Time; The Church's Year" which is volume three of "Using Evangelical Lutheran Worship". Below are two long quotes concerning Lent and Concerning Ash Wednesday:

#### Concerning Lent on page 84:

Lent lasts forty days, as did the flood of Noah, Moses' visit with God on Sinai, Elijah's walk to the mountain of God, Jesus' temptation in the desert. According to one interpretation, the time from Ash Wednesday and Holy Saturday results in forty days only by eliminating the Sundays, for Sunday is always a celebration of resurrection. By that understanding, during Lent, Sundays are somewhat in Lent – for example, we do not say or sing "Alleluia" – and yet not fully subsumed under a medieval Lenten attitude of penitence.

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The prayer after communion for Lent summarizes the meaning of the season. Our compassionate God gives us the bread of heaven. We join together, pilgrims through Lent on our way to Easter. Our fasting is a hunger for justice, our alms a making of peace, and our prayer the song of grateful hearts.

#### Concerning Ash Wednesday on page 85:

The Ash Wednesday service, which begins Lent, starts on page 251 of the assembly edition (ELW). This service's ritual use of ashes reminds Christians of two central truths of the human condition. We are mortal. As Genesis 3 says, we are earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. *Adam* comes from *Adamah*, meaning soil, the human from humus. As well, we are sinners, and as Israelite tradition ritualized this, we repent in dust and ashes. As the depiction on page 251 suggests, we are encircled by the water of baptism, once again having the cross of Christ traced on our forehead... the ashes "say" the meaning of the day. We



begin the Lenten forty days by acknowledging that we are mortal and will die, that we lament our sins, and that we need to be washed with baptismal waters.

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The Entire liturgy for Ash Wednesday maintains a tone of solemn focus on sin and death. The people gather in silence, with no musical accompaniment. The opening song may be Psalm 51, the psalm traditionally associated with the penitent King David, or another such penitential psalm, Kyrie, litany, or hymn.... A substantial confession of sin follows the sermon. The litany makes clear that every individual sin affects the entire community and that we are all implicated by the sin of others. In the assembly we help one another by joining together to confess our joint sinfulness. So the prayer pleads in the plural voice for God to forgive a lengthy list of human failings.

### **Planning Lent:**

Collaboration? Lent is a great time to get together with other congregations in your areas to bring life to the Ash Wednesday, Mid-week special lent worship/meals, and mid-week Holy Week times.

As you consider all the above thoughts, we wish you blessing and inspiration on all you do.

Included with this document on worship.ca is a PowerPoint/pdf document produced by the Synod of Alberta and the Territories. Week by week, song by song, gesture by gesture there are so many possibilities in bringing the season alive. This resource was developed by Ben Johnston-Urey:

*Ben Johnston-Urey is a composer of contemporary Lutheran liturgy and song, whose works are used in congregations and synod gatherings across North America. He and his family are grateful to live in Whitehorse, Yukon, on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. Ben serves as worship leader at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Whitehorse, and is a member of the ABT Synod Worship Arts Team. For more on Ben's music, please visit [www.johnston-urey.com](http://www.johnston-urey.com).*

Peace.

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