

NYAPC CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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Coming Up:

This Sunday, February 22:

First Sunday of Lent.

The Ashworth family will be leading Gathering Time!

Caroline White is helping with Worship Play.

Youth-Adult CE Options.

Choice 1: Alice begins Faith and Fiction class for Adults and youth. Youth Confirmation series begins at this class.

We are reading *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson as our first book. Even if you haven't read the book, please do attend. We will read selections together. Room 511. It is fine to come in after gathering time.

Choice 2: Introductory and Intermediate Bell Ringing - Building on last year's classes, participants will review the basics of ringing hand bells and rehearse music that can be presented as part of worship. The ability to read music is helpful, but adventurous non-readers are also welcome to take part. Room 127.

Beginning Lent

We began the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday a few days ago. That evening, I was asked a terrific question: Why do we put ashes on our foreheads?

Perhaps not the most standard answer, but this is why I do it: I believe that the ashes help us experience that God is always present with us and for us.

The ashes come from last year's Palm Sunday branches, the Sunday that marks Jesus's entrance into Jerusalem and a distinct beginning to his journey to the cross. For me, these palms of Hosanna! represent the range of our emotions from joy to sadness, and even those emotions from our seeking justice to seeking vengeance. These palms remind me that things can change very fast, and even if we don't always make the right choices, God's grace is bigger than us all. God's grace isn't something we can get rid of no matter how hard we might try.

When we put these ashes on our foreheads, I'm reminded of the cycle of life - from the life of the palms, to them being turned to ash, and then eventually going back into the soil to contribute to new creation. I am humbled. That is the new creation we look toward on Easter. (continued on page 2)

Worms and Lent

In a way for our children (primarily those who come up for children's time) to experience the season of Lent and to continue our Food and Faith conversation, we will be learning a bit about red-wiggly worms each week during Lent. The worms will make an appearance soon. This week, it was too cold for them to be shipped. However, their home has arrived! Especially for lovers of creepy-crawlies, come to church these next few weeks. (And if you don't like creepy-crawlies, we'll be doing other things too.)

Confirmation Starts this Sunday, Feb 22!

*Please pray for the class as we accompany each other
on the journey of faith.*

Please take this facilities survey before Sunday!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NYAPC>

Ash Wednesday

by Poet and Pastor Kathryn
Lester-Bacon

*Take dust and dip the finger
in its pool.*

*Take ash and wipe the
forehead clean of guise.*

*Mark countenance, that
earthly vestibule.*

*Claim death upon the
entrance; then, arise.*

*Arise, anointed, freed from
world's pretense*

*that we may bind the tides
of hard goodbyes*

*and fix, with words of good
well-reasoned sense,*

*and deny what twists and
burns, what pierces sides.*

*When grief draws founts of
words—all kind, bring ash;*

*Where gestures flame and
sputter, pile the dust;*

*Hold the bodies of each
other through billows'
crash;*

*Be mortal in the face of
death's great Must.*

*Touch ash and tears and sin
and pain that gives*

*the place our feints may
die; for there, Christ lives.*

(Beginning Lent, continued from page 1)

The Lenten season is different from the Advent one. There isn't the holiday hustle that we remember leading up to Christmas. Instead the Lenten season is about slowing down and contemplation. Perhaps it is thinking over why we do things. Perhaps it is a time to focus on practices of prayer that can lead to a greater sense of the wholeness of the Spirit.

Perhaps, this Lenten season you might give something up. For many years, I attempted (and occasionally succeeded) in giving up chocolate. Perhaps for you it is a time to add something like reading from the Bible, reading a spiritual book, or praying individually or with a partner. This year, I'm focusing on the meaning of Sabbath and the cycle of Sabbath can shape our whole lives. I'll let you know around Easter (if you'd like) what the Spirit bubbles up.

In whatever way you honor this season, I hope you seek out a spiritual practice or time to seek after and to experience God on your own and with others, I hope you do honor this season of renewal, of exceptions and of eager longing. Blessings.

Weather related closings? Because of our location between 2 metro stops, in the event of extreme weather, especially on Sundays, the church rarely closes. If we do close, there will be an announcement on the website and likely an all church email. However, if you live where conditions are unsafe to commute, even if you have a leadership role (teaching, liturgist etc.) please stay home and be safe! If you ever need a last minute Sunday School sub, please let Alice know.

Nursery Updates:

- ◆ The painting is almost done! Go take a look. We also have new area carpets and some other new decor. The Trustees are working the ceiling tiles. If your shoes have salt or other winter weather on them, please leave them on the bookshelf (aka old bookshelf) outside of the nursery.
- ◆ Want to continue the weekday Preschool discussion? Please email Alice to be added to the group.