

*Ash Wednesday is February 14.*

*So we have to ask the question.*



*The answer is . . . Everything!*

That's right! Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day this year. Think for a moment about the appropriateness of this coincidence. Confess your sin. Have ashes marked on your forehead with the words, "You are dust and to dust you shall return." And then hear that God loves you to the end of the earth no matter what. That is agape love—the love that God extends to all people without demand and without reserve.

This is juxtaposed with the cultural celebration of eros love that binds two people together with sexual desire and human longing for companionship and care.

God created humankind capable of expressing love for each other (philia), for an abiding partner (eros) and for receiving the agape love that is bold enough to call us dust and then to raise us up to be the very presence of God in the world.

God's love is most fully known in the cross. Yes, that hideous tool of execution. As a former parishioner once said, "Why do Christians have to have that awful cross as a symbol? Why not something more pleasing like a laughing Buddha? That's so much easier to get behind." The cross is our symbol because we are linked not only to the cross but also to the resurrection. It is a sign that God is present in every suffering—those who are executed in favor of another, those who suffer racism, sexism, or any other -ism that sets people apart and dismisses "them" as less than "us," in our grief at the loss of a beloved one, the loss of our own energy or capacity or strength. God is present in them all. Loving us in spite of our "dustiness" and breathing new life into us over and over and over again.





## Remember and Renew Your Baptism – Looking Toward Lent

Throughout the ages, Lent has been a time to prepare converts to Christianity to be baptized at the Vigil of Easter, symbolically joining in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Today, when no adults are preparing for baptism in our community, Lent is a period of baptismal renewal, that is, a time to remember what it means to be a child of God and a disciple of Christ. For the six weeks of Lent, you are invited into an intentional time of reflection on what it means to you to be a baptized child of God?

Take some time this month to gather information about your baptism. Find your baptism certificate. Do you have pictures of that day? Who are/were your Godparents or sponsors? Where were you baptized? Why did your parents bring you for baptism or did you choose to be baptized as an older child or adult?

Also think about this: who are the people who have helped form your faith? Parents? Grandparents? A special Sunday School teacher? A mentor or friend? What events have impacted your faith by making it stronger or raising doubt? Have there been times when you walked away or stomped away from church or God? What brought you back?

Shake loose some of those old experiences and memories. They may hold treasures as yet untouched as you reflect on your journey of faith during the weeks of Lent. May God bless your searching and your remembering.

Pastor Bev

### **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ON FEBRUARY 11 at 10:45 am**

Annual Reports due to the church office by February 1.



For the Month of February

Sue G. Speicher Edwards February 11  
 Araceli Hope Adams February 12  
 Suzanne L. Craney Miller February 18  
 Riley Cain February 24  
 Rosemarie Koplín February 24  
 Lorin Leslie February 24  
 Susan Wainess February 25  
 Glenn Johnson February 26  
 Marvin L. Daniel February 27



**SENIOR SUPPORT SERVICES**  
 Thank you for all of the donations!

As the cold winter is upon us we need to remember our friends that we serve through **Senior Support Services**. Cooking and serving a meal monthly is important. In addition, they have more needs that perhaps we can address. In their appeal for donations they also printed their **Winter Wish List**. This is it: coats, sweatshirts, gloves, scarves, new underwear, heavy socks, blankets, sleeping bags, hand lotion, chapstick, and hand and foot warmers. You can drop these items off at the center( 846 E 18th Av) between 7 am and 7 pm, M-F. Or bring them with you to church and we will make sure they get there. The blue bin will be in the parlor.



**FAIR TRADE COFFEE, TEA, COCOA, AND CHOCOLATES**

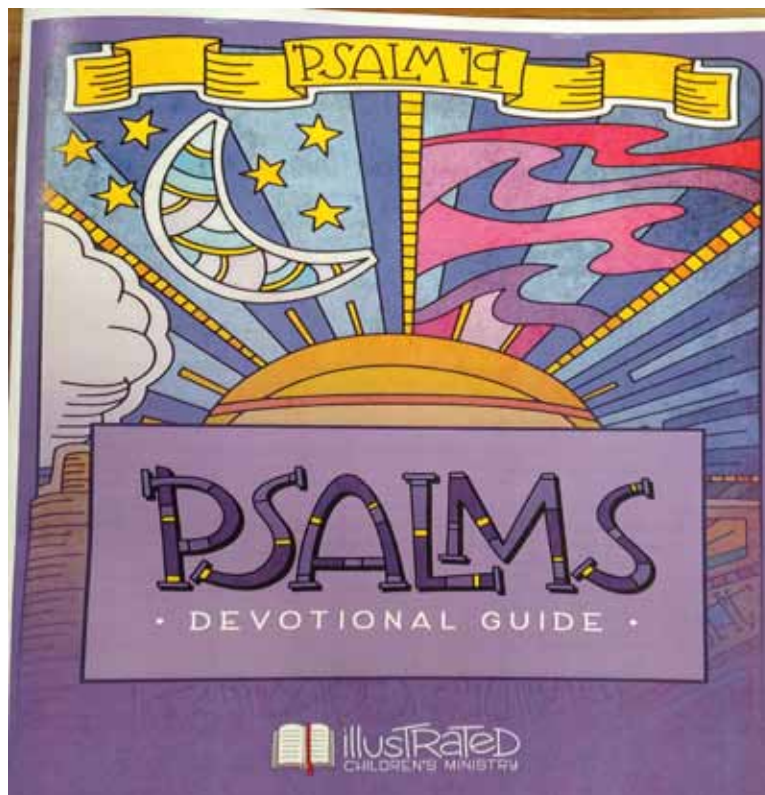
Thanks to all of our loyal customers and donors! We appreciate your purchases and donations. Because you have supported the sales, and made generous donations (both in the big cup on the shelf and at the table or cart), we are able to benefit small farmer co-ops, strengthen equitable trade systems, and provide Fair Trade Coffee after church services every Sunday.

**Financials of Messiah**

<i>Church General Fund Income December</i>		<i>YTD</i>
<i>Offerings</i>	<i>\$14,905.86</i>	<i>\$151,305.75</i>
<i>(includes special offerings, King Soopers, interest earned, memorial gifts)</i>		
<i>Rental and Building Use</i>	<i>1,339.52</i>	<i>16,942.02</i>
<i>Total Income</i>	<i>\$16,245.38</i>	<i>\$168, 247.77</i>
<i>Total Expenditures</i>	<i>20,669.61</i>	<i>251,689.42</i>
<i>NET</i>	<i>(\$ 4,424.23)</i>	<i>(\$83, 441.65)</i>

## Volunteers Make a Difference...

...especially in times of transition. Over the last several weeks, you have been asked to “do a little bit more” to help us in the transition process. Your collective response has been nothing short of amazing; painting, organizing, cleaning, REorganizing, pulling weeds, counting offering, closing on Sundays, keeping records, tending the office, watering the plants, straightening the pews.....the list goes on and on, but so do the needs. If you can give some time on Sunday after church, we can use more members on our Closing Team, and the Altar Guild is also in need of people to setup and cleanup Communion on Sunday mornings. Both of these “opportunities” would be about a 30-minute commitment. If you’d like to be a part of the Sunday morning ministry team we can certainly accommodate you there also. Lector? Greeter? Communion Assistant? Contact Leah if you’d like to help in any way. (leah@messiahdenver.org). THANK YOU MESSIAH FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!



### Lenten Devotions Available at Church

A book of Lenten devotions based on the Psalms is available for you to use this season. There are nine devotions – one for each week plus two days in Holy Week. There is a reflection for adults, a reflection for children and questions for discussion with children and going deeper for adults. This is a great resource for families or individuals of any age. There are also separate coloring sheets to support your meditation and reflection.

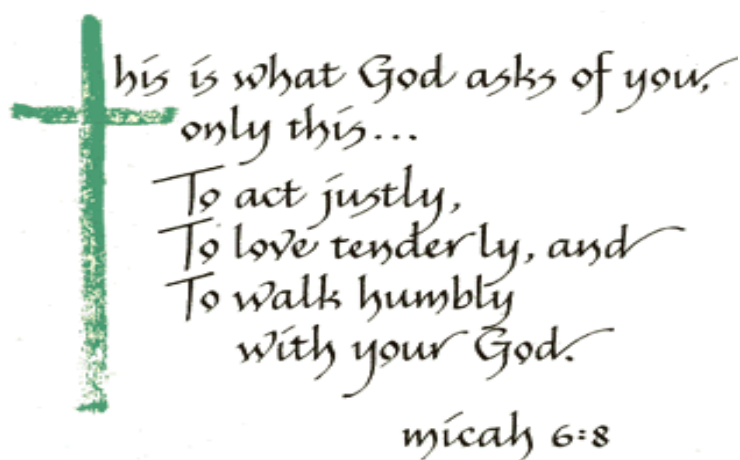
## The Look and Feel of Worship in Lent

The six weeks of Lent have been called “spring training for Easter.” The early church formed Lent as a particular time because the Easter celebration of resurrection was the pinnacle of Christian faith. To fully understand and appreciate Easter, one needed time to reflect and prepare. These weeks were also the time that people who wanted to become Christians concluded a three year period of training in the faith and discernment about their commitment to follow the way of Christ. These weeks were a time of intense preparation for their baptism on the night between Good Friday and Easter morning. This was all before Constantine declared Christianity to be the religion of the Holy Roman Empire. Citizenship in the empire and Christianity then became closely intertwined.

For decades, Lent meant self denial, fasting, and feeling really bad about yourself – the goal was to feel bad enough to appreciate Christ’s sacrifice on the cross to pay the price for your sin. In the 1960’s with the liturgical renewal of Vatican II (which impacted liturgy and worship across the spectrum of organized Christianity) Lent was wrested away from the themes of self-punishment and Christ’s humiliation “for our sake.” Instead, the ancient time of preparation for baptism was restored. Self reflection and discernment remain integral parts of the season, but we no longer look to the suffering Christ on the cross as the price required to satisfy the hunger of an angry God. We look at the cross today as a sign of the price that is asked of all of us who follow Christ to stand up against the powers that stand in the way of God’s kingdom of justice and mercy coming to full fruition on earth. That is what Jesus did and it cost him his life. Following Christ may require the same of us, literally or figuratively. The self-reflection and discernment of Lent help us to re-center ourselves and recalibrate our vocation as the presence of Christ at our work, in our community and the world.

What does that mean for worship in the time of Lent? The season takes a somber note. The Alleluias are “put away” into a sort of hibernation so that they spring forth ever more joyfully at Easter. The church wears purple – a sign of royalty for we are called to a royal priesthood but not the kind we would like to imagine of finery and privilege. Jesus sets a new standard of royalty as one who lifts up the lowly and brings dignity and honor to all people.

We confess that we in our humanity, despite our best intentions and desires, contribute to the fracturing of nature and society. We remember that in our very essence, we are dust – with only a short time on earth to bring God’s kingdom to fulfillment. We sing our liturgy in plain tone chant inviting the harmony and simplicity to carry our song both outward and inward. And we look to the cross not as a sign of defeat but a sign of victory that death cannot vanquish the power of God to renew and restore God’s beloved creation.



Psalms 115:16

The heavens are the heavens of the LORD, But the earth He has given to human beings.

### Ten Simple Things You Can Do to Fight Global Warming

1. Recycle and buy minimally packed goods as much as possible.
2. Wash clothes in cold or warm water, not hot.
3. Install low flow shower heads.
4. Run the dishwasher only when full and don't heat to dry dishes. Better yet, wash dishes by hand.
5. Replace standard light bulbs with CFL, or better yet, LED bulbs.
6. Plug leaks in windows and doors.
7. Replace old appliances with Energy Star appliances.
8. Walk, bike, carpool, or use public transportation whenever possible.
9. Adjust your thermostat - lower in winter, higher in summer.
10. Share these simple steps with friends, family and neighbors!

### **This month we are dedicating our Book Swap cart to the Green Team.**

We will share our books, magazines and articles on any and all environment related issues. Awareness is one of the first steps in creating solutions so we want to educate ourselves and others. Bring in an item in exchange for one on the cart. When you're done bring it back and select another. Also, check out the Green Team displays for February.





## Support the MCC Budget – Use Reloadable King Soopers Gift Cards

Please remember to use your King Soopers card when buying gas, groceries and prescriptions. If you need a card you can purchase them on Sundays after church from Susie Anderson or the coffee table if she is not there. It's easy to use and can really make a difference in our monthly offerings.

Does it really matter if I use my King Soopers gift card?

**Yes it does!** In 2017, Messiah received over \$2,300 in rebates from the gift cards. This money supports our general fund. Can we make that number double in 2018? Your gift card must be coded for Messiah. Susie Anderson or the Fair Trade table can sell you one for the \$25 that is pre-loaded on the card. If you have a card in your wallet or in a drawer or somewhere you can't recall and it hasn't been used in 3 months, you will need to get a new card because the designation for Messiah will expire if not used for a period of time.

Here's how to use the card. Whenever you shop at King Soopers or King Soopers gas stations pre-load the card before checking out and then use it to pay for your purchase. Five percent of your purchase will be donated by King Soopers to Messiah. There is no additional cost to you. A few extra steps at the checkout and mindfulness about using it every time will make a big difference to MCC.

## In Our Prayers

We pray for: John Cain, Pam Farar, Friends and family of Dennis Perret, Winnie Jergensen, Mira Larson, Eleanor Miller, Ken Peden, Rocky Piro, Sue Ricci, Karen Rose, Nancy Wee (friend of Bonnie Short), Vera Thorne, Jackie West, Ron White, Sherrill, and Zoe and her family.



## February 4

Assisting Minister: Denise Larson  
Lector: Sue Edwards  
Greeter(s): Irene Brock  
Laity Prayer: Sue Bomar  
Communion Server: Tammy Heid  
Altar Guild: Katie A. and Sue S.

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## February 11

Assisting Minister: Teresa Stenwall  
Lector: Adrienne Adams  
Laity Prayer: n/a  
Greeter(s): Shirley Karabotos  
Communion Server: Sharon Lipsey  
Altar Guild: S. Lipsey and L. Peden  
Closer(s): tbd  
Counters: tbd

Happy Hour Friday February 9th at Jett on Colfax and Elm. Hope you can join us at 6 pm.

## February 18

Assisting Minister: Sue Edwards  
Lector: Karen Schimke  
Laity Prayer: n/a  
Greeter(s): Susie Anderson  
Communion Server: Marcia Chuvarsky  
Altar Guild: C. Smith and F. Sitone  
Closer(s): tbd  
Counters: tbd

### **Church Staff**

Interim Pastor + Rev. Beverly Piro  
Director of Music + Eric French  
Office Administrator + Suzanne Miller  
Volunteer Coordinator + Leah Peden

### **Web site**

[www.messiahdenver.org](http://www.messiahdenver.org)

### **E-mail**

[info@messiahdenver.org](mailto:info@messiahdenver.org)

### **Phone**

303-355-4471

*After hours pastoral emergency 206-300-1947*

### **Sunday Worship and Sunday School**

**9:30 A.M.**

## February 25

Assisting Minister: Barb Ritzen  
Lector: Carolyn Smith  
Laity Prayer: Adrienne Adams  
Greeter(s): Myrna Francy  
Communion Server: Carolyn Smith  
Altar Guild: T. Heid and F. Sitone  
Closer(s): tbd  
Counters: tbd

## **March 4**

Assisting Minister: Frances Sitone  
Lector: Jim Bonham  
Laity Prayer: Bill Dillon  
Greeter(s): Karen Schimke  
Communion Server: Frances Sitone  
Altar Guild: Katie A. and Sue S.  
Closer(s): tbd  
Counters: tbd



