

Ash Wed A 11

March 10, 2011

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer.
Amen.

Doctors, healers and science have told us for years we should approach our wellness with wholeness. Our physical well-being is affected by our emotional well-being or our financial well-being or our vocational well-being. Our Spiritual well-being is a part of that total approach as well. Hopefully each of you picked up a booklet as you entered today. These are yours to help, encourage and guide you in these forty days of Lent. We will work our way around the wheel, examining how each spoke effects us and how we might improve our overall well-being as we improve the different aspects of life.

Today we begin with the physical well-being. Physical is about a lot of things, the activity we do, the things we eat and drink and keeping our bodies fit and strong. Many experts say one way to keep fit is to walk 10,000 steps a day. So we have pedometer for any of you who want one. Then to help you stay accountable or to keep track of your progress on page 4-5 you can record your steps each day. One way we want to encourage you to care for your physical well-being in these 40 days and beyond.

It is about balance. Some of you might already be in good shape for one or more of the spokes. So as we journey together we can encourage others in the areas we are stronger in as they encourage us in our weaker areas. The result would be that each of us will become a more well rounded holistic person as we become holistic in our life as a community of believers.

Today we begin a journey together, a journey through this Lenten season toward Jesus passion, death, burial as we come out of the darkness celebrating Christ resurrection on Easter Sunday. During these 40 days of Lent we will reflect, read scripture, pray, walk, expand our minds, reconnect with friends, and share our gifts as we seek a holistic approach to our spiritual well being.

With arrival of the season of Lent we gather and hear the words, 'remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.' Here we are reminded that we are limited and

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finite beings. We come knowing our sinful nature, the constant pull to look inward towards our own selfish desires.

While at the same time we gather knowing we are in need of forgiveness and salvation, we come believing and knowing the Lord our God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

We come as God calls us to return to Him with willing and repentant hearts, to come back to the light of God from the darkness and gloom which often surrounds us. To prepare our hearts and minds, our bodies and spirits for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near.

Ash Wednesday is a reminder to us that we are God's people called and gathered. It is a reminder that we are dust and of our mortality just as we are reminded of our utter dependence on the grace God bestows upon us. God wants us to come to him wholly not just with our money, not just with our prayers, not just with our fasting or our bodies but with our whole heart and mind and soul.

As we journey with Jesus toward the cross and his death we come knowing that we too will one day die. We come seeking reconciliation not so we will live, but that by believing in Christ we too will be raised to a new life with him. At the center of the wheel it says, "in baptism, a new creation in Christ." That is what this journey is about. Becoming the new creation we have already been transformed into. This year our Lenten journey is about becoming a more complete and balanced person in life as we await the day of salvation that is coming and is coming soon.

AMEN

T.G.B.T.G.

Pastor Michael