

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

March 9, 2011
Ash Wednesday

Bill Levering
Joel 2:1-1, 12-17

First Reformed is grateful for the many people who wrote this Devotional. We could have ordered a ready-made one. We could have simply suggested these passages for Lenten readings at the dinner table. But it's so much more personal to read what our congregation thinks about these scripture passages that take us, day by day, through Lent.

Attending the Lenten dinners and classes certainly prepares us for Easter, but not everyone can take part in these activities. Further, the daily readings provide a quiet time, a meditative time, to remember the Easter story and connect with the individuals writing about these passages.

It's not easy writing a devotional. We sometimes think that we need a minister beside us all the way. The Protestant tradition, however, allows us, urges us, to come to Scripture as we are, see how it calls us personally and forces us to think.

Some of us will read these in the morning, before entering the busy day (sometimes the fray). Some of us will read them at the dinner table, engaging the family. Some will read them before bed.

Whatever is your fashion is right for you. Read them, consider them, and talk to the writers. Let this Devotional lead you to Easter day.

We thank Heather Scribner, Office Administrator and Tani Breitenbach, Administrative Assistant, for their work on this Devotional.



ASH
WEDNESDAY

Lent is a season of reflection and preparation that reviews the major events and teachings in the life of Jesus. But it is a bit artificial, driven by a lunar

calendar we don't keep much anymore. However arbitrary this particular forty days, Joel reminds us that there are plenty of times when we need to return to the consideration of God. He is speaking to a community that is coping with a big problem with locusts and wondering the cause and the cure. In this time of crisis, "return to me with all your heart," the prophet intones for God. You may not be plagued with locusts this year, but returning to the Lord with all your heart will certainly prepare you for that day when you are overwhelmed and even your existence threatened by thousands of tiny annoyances. So sanctify your fast, gather in a solemn assembly and prepare for the depth of God which will give us victory over the tumult of trivia that threatens us.

March 10, 2011
2nd Day of Lent

A Grateful Heart

I thank you God for most this amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes.

E.E. Cummings