

HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION:

A PERIOD OF PRAYER, REMEMBRANCE and CELEBRATION AT GREENFOREST

The Worship Team

The Christian Calendar of sacred worship events marks February 17th as the beginning of the Lenten Season. This is a time when Christians all over the world begin a period of reflection, meditation and repentance as we remember and identify with the journey Jesus the Christ took to the cross, and as we prepare to celebrate his glorious resurrection. It is our hope that the Greenforest congregation will acknowledge this period of reverence and will make a conscious decision to become observant by participating in the holy activities that are planned for 2010.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

Ash Wednesday symbolizes the period when Christians begin a conscious effort to identify with the sufferings of our Lord. Ashes represent mourning; however, we know there is a great day of celebration to come. 2009 was the first year we commemorated the beginning of Lent with the Ash Wednesday worship services. We did not have our own ashes to utilize. This year, we have followed the liturgical practice and preserved the palm leaves from 2009. We have burned them and will be utilizing them as the ashes for 2010.

Pastor Mitchell, staff, students and parents of the Academy will engage in worship during their General Assembly on Wednesday, February 17 at 8:30am. Students will be led in prayer, litany, song and receive a word concerning what this period means in the life a Christian. The **symbolic** conferring of ashes will be placed on students' and staff foreheads as they exit the sanctuary.

During the Wednesday evening service, the Greenforest congregation will assemble together in the sanctuary for worship at 7:15pm. The message of Jesus the Christ's journey will again be heard and experienced by all as we are reminded of His ultimate sacrifice for our salvation. Pastor Mitchell will share a brief message. The **symbolic** conferring of ashes will be placed on worshippers as they exit the sanctuary. Let us all commit to a period of prayer and fasting.

LENTEN SEASON PRAYER AND MEDITATION

The Lenten season is typically observed by Christians with a 40-day period of prayer and fasting, meditation, reflection and renewed commitment. This year, we will join with Christians all over the world in a Global Prayer effort that focuses on our missional and evangelical call to bring others to Christ. Our prayer focal theme this year is: **"Seeking God for our Community, City and Country 2010.** This is a bit different from past prayer efforts. We know that the world is quickly forgetting Jesus' sacrifice and there are still many who have not heard the gospel in our communities. We pray, this year, for boldness to witness and for God's people to hear His word. God has appointed four writers for our meditations this year:

- Bro. Alan Sherman (Deaf Ministry)
- Min. Althea Waters (Pastoral Care)
- Sis. Olivia Maupin (Discipleship)
- Min. Dianne Ash (Director of Christian Education)

We encourage you to secure a copy of the first 10-Day Lenten Meditation Guide that will become available on February 17th during the Ash Wednesday Worship Service. Each subsequent 10-Day prayer guide will be made available to you in various locations of the church and at the Greenforest website. Pray with us according to the guide and you will join countless others in our congregation and globally who will be "seeking God for our community, city and country."

DRAPING OF THE CROSS IN THE SANCTUARY

In biblical times, the Jews utilized the cloth to remove bodies from the cross following crucifixion. The absence of Jesus' body is symbolized by the presence of only the cloth. The drape on the cross represents victory over death. At Greenforest, the cross above the baptismal is traditionally draped with a purple (King of the earth-mourning His death) cloth signifying the beginning of the Lenten Season. The purple cloth will remain on the cross throughout Lent and will be replaced with a white cloth (resurrected Lord – newness of life) on Easter Sunday (Resurrection Day).

PALM SUNDAY

Jesus' entry into the City of Jerusalem is celebrated on the Sunday prior to Resurrection Day. The fourth Sunday in March, March 28th, we will celebrate the "triumphant" entry. Our Drama Ministry will line the entrance of the church driveway at 7:45am and 10:45am shouting "Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord". Let this dramatic welcome prepare your heart for worship as you rush to enter the sanctuary and receive palm leaves. We are hopeful that you will wave your palm leaf during the energetic praise and worship service symbolizing the people's praises to the "coming King."

HOLY WEEK

The Monday, following Palm Sunday, represents the beginning of what is recognized as the Holy Week. It is the week Jesus was tried, convicted, crucified and buried in the borrowed tomb. We will observe this week with these symbolic activities:

- **Wednesday, Family Passover Meal (Seder)** – Symbolizes the final meal Jesus shared with His disciples in observance of the traditional Jewish Passover. We will share a symbolic Passover meal beginning @ 7:00pm in the Genesis Room. **Be reminded that this meal will follow the traditional cuisine of the Jews which is different from the dishes we typically eat. Additionally, the food is intended to be scarce as overeating for the Jews represents a gluttonous, selfish nature. It is also eaten quickly to be reminded of the hurried preparation for exodus from Egypt.** The wine and the bread on each table will be consumed as we share communion with one another. Our drama ministry will make the event more "real" for us by presenting Jesus the Christ, His disciples and engaging us in their interactions during, this, His final night with them.
- **Thursday, Maundy Thursday Worship Service** – We will gather together once again to worship and recall the events leading to the crucifixion. We will commemorate fellowship and servanthip by participating in **foot washing** one with the other as we follow Jesus' example with His disciples. The Celestial Choir will lead us in worship and the biblical reflections will be shared. Make a personal commitment to serve one another on this night.
- **Friday, Good Friday Worship Service** – We will gather together once more to worship God, be reminded of the crucifixion and celebrate the coming resurrection. The Voices of Inspiration will sing and a preached word will be shared.

RESURRECTION (EASTER) SUNDAY

The liturgist will proclaim "Jesus Christ is Risen!" The congregation will respond "Christ is Risen Indeed!" The Brotherhood choir will lead us in worship as we gather for the first service beginning at 6:30am. This service is known as **Sunrise Service** and signifies Jesus' early resurrection from the grave and proclaims the new day for those of us who are washed in His blood.

A fellowship breakfast meal follows this service at 8:30 and our Children's Ministry will present the story of Jesus the Christ with song and recitation at 9:30am.

The Music Ministry will lead us in celebration with an Easter Cantata: "**Shout for Joy – A Soulful Celebration of Easter.**" This promises to be a unique presentation with a series of musical selections rendered by an anticipated 100-voice combined choir. The choir will be accompanied by the Greenforest Orchestra under the directorship of Bro. Travis Kimber. Students from various high schools will support this effort by joining with our orchestra on this day. Dance, Drama, Deaf Ministry and the Handbell choir will also support this celebrative presentation in worship.

Please plan to worship with us during this very important time in the life of the church. If you'd like to learn more about the biblical origins of these Christian sacred events, we encourage you to visit the following websites:

Ash Wednesday

<http://www.cresourcei.org/cyashwed.html>

The Season of Lent

<http://www.cresourcei.org/cylent.html>

The Christian Passover Meal

<http://www.crivoice.org/seder.html>

The Easter Season

<http://www.cresourcei.org/cyeaster.html#top>