

First Presbyterian Church of Alvin

Press Bytes



To the Saints at First Presbyterian:

Greetings: The week of February 14 was one of the worse weeks in Texas weather history. Unbelievable cold weather descended upon us causing horrible results with which are still being dealt. There are thousands with broken water pipes, flooded houses, no water and little food still. Power pretty much restored. What awaits are monstrous utility bills for many that are off the wall as I'm told as well as waiting weeks not days to get pipes repaired. The water damage to the home is another great problem awaiting so many. Here in Texas, many were doing all they could just to survive. It was a really bad week and it's not over yet

Apparently, most of our problems could have been either avoided or lessened if different decisions had been made by those in charge: the legislature, the public utility commission, ERCOT and the utility plants themselves. Who is to blame? All of the above to some degree.

There are lots of reasons given for the failure but the one thought that seems to be at the heart of the problem is an attitude towards the national government. We hear a lot about independence, wanting to be independent of national guidelines and Federal control. The other states and parts of Texas that were on the national grid didn't suffer the fate of those of us on the Texas grid. We paid a terrible price for our independence and lack of oversight of our power grid.

One can somewhat understand this attitude since we never have terrible winters. Our problems usually come from heat since we have a lot more hot months than cold. Regardless of the reasons, I think we will need to make some serious adjustments to the grid to cover both summer and winter extremes.

In today's world, 2021, I think another word needs to be highlighted for future living. The word is Interdependence. That simply means we will need to be more involved in each other's well-being. That is what happened when the state lost power and water. Everyone pulled together to help each other come through the terrible time. We are still doing that. It's what happens every time there is a national crisis. We pull together. While we didn't want to be part of a national power grid, we now welcome all the national help we can get. President Biden has declared Texas a national disaster and will help in any way the government can help; interdependence.

The early church relied in interdependence for its survival. In the book of Acts there are numerous examples of coming together and sharing what they had with other Christians. Acts 4: 32-5: 11 is a good example. Jesus told the followers that as we minister to the least of the brethren we minister to him. We need each other and depend upon so many for our well-being and welfare; food, utilities, fuel for vehicles, clothing, etc., the list will be long. Our world has drastically changed from what is use to be. Our neighbors aren't 5 miles away, but 5-12 inches away through sheetrock in apartment houses and condos; a few yards away between houses in neighborhoods. Our freedom and independence is still here but they are expressed in somewhat different ways than they might have been expressed in 1821! It's like a saying in the 60's, "Your freedom to swing your arms ends where my nose begins." There are more noses coming forth each year!

I believe we were created to live together and be there for each other. "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, of the one" (Mr. Spock). Interdependence!

Peace,

C. O.

March Issue

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C.O. (on Cover)

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Inserts

March 2020 Calendar

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Carol "Sissy" Gross
- 4 Rachel Watkins
- 13 Laura Dantzman
- 14 Carol Warych
- 16 Dorothy DeWalt
- 24 Cathy Rayburn
- 27 Evan Gondesen



And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Mark 11:22-24



Daylight Savings Time begins

Sunday, March 14, 2021.

Don't forget to move your clocks **ahead** one hour.

Winter Storm Uri - The (Good, Bad, & Ugly) Pictures



Tuesday, February 16, 2021



Lent

By: Chris Lo

On Ash Wednesday, we usually expect to have an Ashen Cross placed on our forehead.



After all, the Book of Common Worship, commended by the 205th General Assembly (1993) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) instructed that “A worship leader marks the forehead of each person with the ashes, using the following words: ‘Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return’” (Genesis 3:19).

The origin of this sixth century custom is credited to Pope Gregory I [Gregory the Great] (c. 540 – 604). This marking, a sensory reminder, evokes another text from the Book of Genesis, “Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7).

In the Prayer of the Day (or Collect) for Ash Wednesday on P. 222, the Book of Common Worship reminded us of God’s

providence and our duty in response during our earthly sojourn.



“Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of tenderness, and strengthen us to face our mortality, that we may reach with confidence for your mercy; in Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”

Ash Wednesday 2021 saw the formation of new spiritual disciplines.

On Monday, February 8, 2021, DeAndre Johnson, the esteemed Pastor of Music and Worship Life at Christ United Methodist Church in Sugar Land, placed

ashes into bags while his assistant stapled instruction cards to these bags. On Ash Wednesday, after collecting these bags from their church, members of DeAndre’s congregation virtually joined their pastor and church family online f



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For we walk by faith, not by sight.
2 Corinthians 5:7

EASTER LILIES

As we've done the past three years, you will be able to purchase Easter Lilies to decorate our sanctuary Easter Sunday morning to celebrate the resurrection of our Savior Jesus. You can honor and/or remember a loved one by completing a form and placing it in an envelope, along with your donation in the form of a check or cash. The envelope containing your form and donation may be placed in the collection plate or taken to the church office during office hours. A form is included in this newsletter for your convenience. Additional forms can be found in the Narthex. The forms need to be received by Sunday, March 20th. You will be able to pick up your plant(s) after worship Easter Sunday, April 4th, or Monday, April 5th. If you prefer, you may donate your lily to one of our home bound members with a note that says: "Happy Easter!" The proceeds from the lily sales will go to the Youth Fund to help expand the Youth Program.



Elder of the Month - Helen Escobedo

Session Highlights

February 2021

Session had not met before the deadline for this newsletter.

Cont. from Pg 2

Tuesday, February 16, 2021



Cont. from Pg. 3

for the Imposition of Ashes. This church also hosted an Ash Wednesday drive-through event. Using a cotton swab to eliminate touch, pastors wore masks and gloves, while they administered the ashes on foreheads.

At Christ Church Episcopal Cathedral in downtown Houston, parishioners did not approach the altar and to have an Ashen Cross placed onto their foreheads. Rather, they remained seated while ashes were sprinkled over worshipers' heads, eliminating the need for touch.



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston too followed instructions issued by the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Priests wore masks while they sprinkle ashes on parishioners' foreheads instead marking their foreheads with a cross.



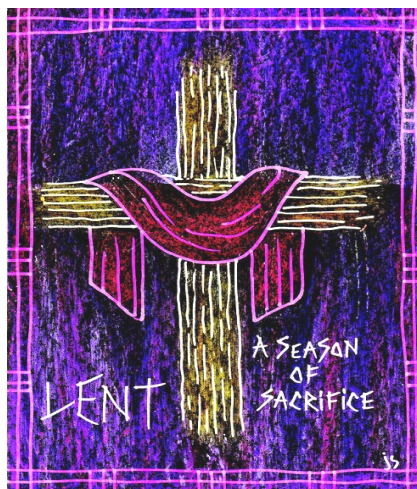
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON

In 2021, even without an Ashen Cross, we can confidently recall that we were "sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever" (P. 414).

Until we return to dust, apart from our declaration of belief in the triune God, our Baptism came with responsibilities. We are told to be a faithful member of this congregation, share in its worship and ministry through our prayers and gifts, our study and service, and so fulfill our calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. We are asked to devote ourselves to the church's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (PP. 409 – 410).

As we begin this Lenten season, please reflect on these words from the Book of Common Worship's Ash Wednesday Liturgy (P. 223):

"I invite you, therefore, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of love, and by reading and meditating on the Word of God. Let us bow before God, our Creator and Redeemer, and confess our sin." Amen.



For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9



CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM

Ongoing Prayers Jill Wheatley, Mark & Belinda Busscher, Rachel Grimmett, Cathy King, Martha Phipps, Helen Escobedo, Mike Wheatley, Wanda Cunningham, Evelyn Robison, Joy Dell DeWitt, Patty

Costanzo, Mary Lee Sebesta, Patsy Howard, Marie Johnson, Mary Salazar, and Yvonne Davis.

Immediate Concerns : The families of those lost in the Dallas wreck, those coping with the consequences of Winter Storm Uri.

Please call the church office with updates.



Tuesday, February 16, 2021



Wednesday, February 17, 2021



