

**Pastor Mollie's Sermon**  
**Ash Wednesday**  
**Feb. 26 2020**

Every year at the time of the Christian Passover  
we celebrate our redemption  
through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration  
and to renew our life by embracing the mystery of  
falling and rising,  
of waning and waxing,  
of ebb and flow,  
of death and new life.  
We begin this holy season  
by acknowledging our need for repentance,  
and for the mercy and forgiveness  
proclaimed in the Gospel.

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes.  
Marking ourselves with ashes reminds us that, in goodness and grace,  
God created us from the dust of the earth and that, through that same goodness and grace, God  
will return us to the dust of the earth when this life ends and the new one begins. Marking  
ourselves with ashes reminds us that we must die to something before we can know new life in  
anything.

As we journey through the season of Lent St. Mark will focus on our 5 senses. Each week we  
will focus on either sight, sound, touch, smell, or taste. On the Sundays in Lent there will be a  
Gospel reading, a story about Jesus that pairs up with each of the 5 senses.... and we will hear  
from a different member each week as they reflect on their own experiences and interpretations.

We used our senses daily... most of the time subconsciously... which can lead to us maybe  
taking some of these senses for granted.  
According to researchers Dr. L.D. Rosenblum, Dr. Harold Stolovitch and Dr Erica Keeps, here's  
how much information each of our senses processes at the same time as compared to our other  
senses.

83.0% – Sight  
11.0% – Hearing  
03.5% – Smell  
01.5% – Touch  
01.0% – Taste

That's surprising. And it flies in the face of some of our conventional educational theories and  
Learning Styles. No matter how you slice the pie, our brains give preference to processing vision  
as compared to our other senses.

Not convinced?

Imagine you're in an open field. How far can you see? About 50 miles. How far can you hear? Maybe a mile or two. How about smell? 10-20 yards, assuming that the wind is not blowing. How about touch? Just an arm's length. Taste? A couple of inches.

And that's for people who have all 5 senses. How many of us know someone with glasses? Hearing aid? Know anyone without a sense of smell? Taste? Or nerve damage and experience loss of feeling in hands or feet?

Throughout the season of Lent we will hear stories from members who experience these senses or impairment of some and what that looks like. We also will get to hear about Jesus and his stories correlated to these 5 senses and learn from our own interpretations of each story.

My hope for Lent is that our senses are heightened, explored, become more present in our daily lives- and learning how we can experience God through them.

For instance, in our homes:

**Sight-** make a Lenten calendar to view each day.

Wear or look for the color purple,

**Touch-** the feel of an actual book/devotional, hand holding, handshakes, hugs between friends, family, neighbors,

**Hearing-** music- notice more of the minor notes through our Lenten hymns, find the quiet moments for reflection or prayer.

**Taste-** the taste of communion bread and wine each Wednesday and Sunday during Lent, our Lenten meals together on Wednesday...or possibly giving up a favorite food,

**Smell-** the one we don't use as much in worship- unless you count the smell of coffee brewing or cinnamon rolls baking for us to enjoy after worship....

Incense can be used... or burning a candle in your home, essential oils, soaps, or even the smell of spring cleaning

No matter how you choose to journey through the next 40 days.... may your senses help guide us through whatever spiritual practice you may choose to embrace....

If you choose to practice the spiritual discipline of fasting this Lent, whether it's from social media on the weekends, or from television in the evenings, or from gossip the entire season, you are embracing the promise of ashes, dying intentionally to old behavior or vice

so that you might know new life in Christ.

If you choose to practice the  
spiritual discipline of generosity this Lent,  
whether it's by increasing charitable giving,  
or doing acts of service to those in need,  
or sending daily notes to those who might be lonely,  
you are embracing the promise of ashes,  
dying intentionally to old comfort or greed  
so that you might know new life in Christ.

If you choose to practice the  
spiritual discipline of devotion this Lent,  
whether it's in daily prayer,  
or weekly scripture reading,  
or increased worship participation,  
you are embracing the promise of ashes,  
dying intentionally to old habit or routine  
so that you might know new life in Christ.

We are dust, and to dust we shall return. But may we live this day, even with the notion of our own mortality, to live, see, touch, smell, and hear Jesus... alongside us... knowing us, loving us, and keeping his promise "I will be with you always."  
Amen.