

Ash Wednesday

“Come away to deserted place all by yourselves and rest awhile.”

(Mark 6:31)

For Lent, I invite you on a journey of meditations and reflections guided by a piece of sculpture created for me by one of West Virginia’s District Superintendents, Joe Hill. This sculpture was created from clay that had been used by the entire cabinet during our prayer retreat a couple of years ago as the cabinet prepared body, mind, and spirit for the upcoming appointment season.

The clay was used as a vehicle for prayer. As each Superintendent prayed, read scripture, meditated – the clay was in their hands being stretched, molded, formed, created into something, and then folding and kneaded back into a lump. At the end of the weeklong retreat, Joe gathered the pieces of clay and with continued prayer and reflection, began to sculpt.

The Sculpture was given to me as a gift, and it has been a centerpiece of remembering, prayer, and meditation ever since.

On this first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, the sculpture reminds me to stop.

Lent is an invitation to prayer and to intentionally spend time on developing a fuller appreciation of the Divine. It is an invitation to expand our vision and our hearts. Ash Wednesday, in particular, is a time to reflect on God’s gift of life, our mortality, and our baptism – the recognition of what God has accomplished/gifted to us through Christ – and God’s call to make our baptismal crosses visible through our thoughts, words, deeds, and sacrifice each and every day.

On this Ash Wednesday allow the sculpture to draw you into these scriptures:

“Come away to deserted place all by yourselves and rest awhile.” (Mark 6:31)

“The Lord your God is with you ... He will quiet you with his love.” (Zephaniah 3 :17)

“Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)

Some questions to ponder on this Ash Wednesday:

1. Is prayer at the heart of my life?
2. How might God be inviting me to be silent and listen with my heart?
3. What are some practical changes that I could make in how I live my life so that I can dedicate more time sitting with God?
4. What do I want from God?
5. What does God want from me?

Visit wvumc.org to see pictures of the sculpture and to read twice weekly reflections by Bishop Steiner Ball.

Daily Lenten Devotions written by the laity of the West Virginia Conference are also available online.