

ARTICLE FOR GAZETTE
February 9, 2007
By Rev. Carol Mariano
Orting United Methodist Church

To go on a journey takes preparation. You have to consider what the trip will require of you and what your own needs will be so you know what to bring along. Doing the right kind of preparation can mean the difference between life and death in some situations. The better we know our own needs and the more honest we can be about our own inadequacies, the better able we are to prepare for emergencies that may develop along the way. This is true not only in the physical sense, but also in terms of our spiritual preparedness.

Today is Ash Wednesday. It is the beginning of a journey for Christians that leads us with Jesus into the center of the struggle that will demand his life and cruelly kill him on a cross. To prepare to take a journey of such magnitude requires soul searching honesty and self evaluation. Jesus sets his face toward Jerusalem fully aware of who he is as son of God but also as son of man, tempted in spirit and fragile in his human body. To be able to transcend death and come to resurrection with Christ begins with giving ourselves fully to the God who creates us out of dust and ashes, who wants to enter into our weakness and recreate us, bringing us into a new kind of life. It is to acknowledge that only through the power of God can eternal life overcome death.

Today is Ash Wednesday and we will come together in our Christian communities to be marked with ashes because we believe God can work in us to bring us through all of life's tragedies and failures, represented in this black mark on our foreheads, to a place of peace and joy. We come ready to start the journey, afraid of what it means to us in our human weakness, yet trusting that somehow in our weakness we will be made strong enough in spirit to endure and continue every step of the way, looking to Christ Jesus to show us the steps that lead from dust and ashes into light and joy.

We at Orting United Methodist Church invite you to join us this evening for our Ash Wednesday service at seven o'clock pm. We would like to help you prepare for this journey along with us.