



February 14, 2021

Dear Friends,

The National Association of Episcopal Schools describes Episcopal Schools as institutions that “...invite all who attend and work in them—Episcopalians and non-Episcopalians, Christians and non-Christians, people of no faith tradition—both to seek clarity about their own beliefs and religions and to honor those traditions more fully and faithfully in their own lives.” We wholeheartedly embrace this sentiment at St. Michael’s and strive to live into these ideals through the intentional design of our academic and chapel programs. With this ideal in mind, we wanted to provide some more details and clarity regarding our Lenten chapels this year.

The liturgical season of Lent is a forty-day season of the church year starting Ash Wednesday and leading up to Easter. During this season, many Christians incorporate disciplines of prayer, almsgiving, and fasting (ie, taking something on, or giving something up) in order to draw closer to God. We encourage you to discuss these practices in your household. As an Episcopal School, we feel it is appropriate to provide clarity around what this season means for the Episcopal tradition and encourage students and faculty alike to explore how it might fit within their own beliefs. Thus, we will hold two special all-school chapel services during Lent: Ash Wednesday (Feb. 17th) and a Holy Week Commemoration Service (March 31st) led by Chaplain Christian Hansen and the Rev. Dr. Jeunée Godsey.

Traditionally, on Ash Wednesday, ashes are imposed on the forehead to remind us of our mortality (“from dust we were created, and to dust we shall return”) and on Holy Wednesday, we have recently started celebrating communion together in observance of Holy Week leading up to Easter. But, with our current COVID-19 safety protocols, we will be doing things a little differently this year.

What does this mean for our family?

- On **Ash Wednesday**, although we will not include the imposition of ashes during our chapel time, Reverend Jeunée will offer our chapel talk about the importance of Ash Wednesday and this season of Lent. ***Parents are invited to join us online for chapel starting at 8:00am on Wednesday, February 17th.***
- On **Holy Wednesday**, we will remember Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples and the institution of Holy Communion. While we will not be receiving Communion together due to the virtual nature of the chapel, there will be a prayer for spiritual communion said by Reverend Jeunée. This prayer is a way in which we can all still share in the Eucharist without being together to share it in person. ***Parents are invited to join us for chapel on our school social media pages starting at 8:00am on Wednesday, March 31st, too.***

Please let us know if you have any questions about how we are planning to celebrate this season of the church year. We are also happy to provide any additional resources that might inform your discussions with your children or help clarify their questions. Above all, though, we invite you to explore with your child(ren) your own faith tradition and what the season of Lent means for you.

Blessings,

Christian Hansen
Chaplain

The Rev. Jeunée Godsey
Rector, St. Michael’s Church

Robert E. Gregg III
Head of School

