

**Lent, Easter, Maundy, and Ashes:  
Bishop Jones Answers Your Questions**

**By: Bishop Scott Jones**

*As the Lenten and Easter season approaches, Bishop Scott Jones answers the questions you are asking about the season.*

**1. Q: What is Lent?**

A: Lent is the season preceding Easter, set aside for repentance, prayer and fasting. The season lasts for 40 days, excluding Sundays, in remembrance of the 40 days Christ spent in the wilderness fasting in preparation for his earthly ministry. The word “Lent” is derived from the Old English word, “lencten” which means “spring.”

**2. Q: What is Ash Wednesday?**

A: Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. The day is set apart for focus on repentance and prayer. Many churches host Ash Wednesday services, in which pastors mark the foreheads of worshippers with ashes as they remind them of God’s somber words to Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter three as the curse of sin fell on all of creation, “For dust you are, and to dust you will return.”

**3. Q: Do I have to keep the ashes on my forehead all day long, or is it okay to remove them once the service is over?**

A: Although many worshippers choose to wear their ashes as a day-long reminder of their mortality, and their need for repentance and forgiveness, it is purely personal preference. If you want to wear your ashes, do so! If not, feel free to remove them after the service.

**4. Q: What is Maundy Thursday**

A. Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter, the day we remember Jesus celebrating one last Passover with his disciples during which he taught them powerful lessons about sacrifice and service as he washed their feet. “Maundy” is an abbreviated form of the Latin word “mandatum” which means “command.” It was during this Passover observance that Jesus challenged his disciples, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another (John 13:34).”

**5. Q: What is Good Friday?**

A: On Good Friday, the Friday before Easter, we commemorate the day Jesus was crucified. We aren’t entirely sure why this day is called “Good Friday.” It might have been a corruption of the term “God’s Friday.” Also, it is interesting to note that not everyone calls this day “Good Friday.” In other parts of the world it is called, “Holy Friday,” “Black Friday,” “Friday of Mourning,” or “Friday of Preparation.” The day sometimes coincides with Jewish Passover, since this was the day Jesus was crucified.

It might seem strange at first to call this day “good.” Crucifixion was horrific, a Roman occupying force’s weapon of choice to terrorize and humiliate their Jewish subjects into submission.

Jesus's death by crucifixion was especially unjust, as he was utterly sinless. So, how can we remember this day of his crucifixion as "good?"

This holy day is good because it represents the lavish love and grace of God, as he gave himself to redeem his creation. And we call it good, because we know the wonderful truth that the dark Friday on Golgotha was not the end. Sunday, and Easter morning, were coming.