

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
February 26, 2020

“THE PARTY’S OVER?”

*“Turn out the lights, the party’s over.
They say that all good things must end.
Call it a night, the party’s over.
Tomorrow starts the same old thing again.”*

I have to wonder, did you start to sing along as you read those lyrics? That’s a song first recorded by Willie Nelson back in 1967. I remember it as the tune that “Dandy Don” Meredith would sing near the end of the original Monday Night Football broadcasts in the 1970s at the point that the outcome of the game was sealed. Many of us look at this as something that applies to today, Ash Wednesday. Isn’t it interesting that Ash Wednesday always falls on Wednesday? Why Wednesday? Well, Lent is a 40-day season, which contains 6 Sundays. Sundays are not technically considered days of the Lenten Season as Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. With that Lent is a 46-day observance leading up to Easter, which if you count backwards from there on the calendar you come to a Wednesday. (unless it’s a Leap Year like this year...then it’s 47, but occasionally adjusting the day to “Ash Thursday” would be confusing). Those of us who have been in the Lutheran Church for a while, or have Roman Catholic roots, know full well that the Season of Lent is a somber time of introspection and confession of sin, and repentance in preparation for the coming observance of the Passion of Christ; His suffering, death and resurrection. Today’s world likes to “party hearty” in the days leading up to Ash Wednesday (i.e. Mardi Gras, Carnival, Fasching, etc.) and then we are supposed to put a damper on such things in an outward display of piety. So, I guess that means that this Ash Wednesday morning the party’s over, right? No, I don’t believe that for an instant. What this day means is that now we are preparing for a party the likes of which this world can’t possibly put on. That is the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus after His triumph over the powers of sin, death and the devil in willingly and obediently suffering crucifixion and death to atone for the world’s sin and reconcile us to God our Father. We are preparing our hearts to enter into the eternal feast that God is preparing for all His children in heaven. Proper preparation includes knowing who God is; His holiness, power, righteousness and the standards that He has set for our conduct, and knowing who we are...poor miserable sinners that not only fall short of those righteous standards but continually rebel against our God. The Season of Lent is a time of recognizing our sin and sinfulness, being sorrowful because of it, and then turning from it and turning back to God (that’s repentance) to receive forgiveness, restoration and eternal healing. Lent is not a time to try to prove our worthiness before God (can’t be done) and others through our pious acts, but rather a time of humble devotion to our God; devoting more of our time, energy and resources to His pursuits than the pursuits of this fallen world. That’s a good thing to do every day of every year. Perhaps the party that the world offers is over, but once the party that God invites us to in Christ Jesus gets started it never ends. Let us be prepared by our God together!