

## Art and Enviroment for Lent

Some of you may be interested in the ways in which we have shaped art and environment for Lent. The following appeared in our Ash Wednesday worship folder and again throughout mid-week Lenten worship:

*O God we praise you for the small, diminished things; for the health at the edge of our sicknesses, for the moment's quiet in the hours of storm, for the few that held when the many broke and ran, for an answer of love in a lynch mob of hate, for the honest saint in a city of betrayals. We praise you for the minor key, the oblique kindness, the hidden joy. May Jesus Christ understand us in whose name we pray. Amen.*

....and then

*Lent is a season "for the minor key." Lenten time is about reflection and contemplation, a time to examine ourselves--some even would say, a depressing time. The journey we are called to make in Lent is to confront our own mortality, our own frailty and brokenness, our deep need for redemption and resurrection.*

*So in Lent we journey to the cross. Along the way, our worship space reminds us of the harshness of life. There are no flowers, no celebratory hangings, little light. The sanctuary is stark, simple, spare. It reflects "the minor key," the diminished things that speak of death and dying.*

(WE PLACED 8 DEAD, MISSHAPEN AND BARREN TREES ACROSS THE FRONT OF THE SANCTUARY.)

*The baptismal font has been emptied of its life-giving waters. In the journey of Lent, we go to the font to find a dry bed of sand and stones. We are invited to notice rough cloth, dormant or dead branches, broken rocks. They remind us of our own parched lives,*

*our own rough edges, our own emptiness.*

(ASH WEDNESDAY'S SERVICE CLOSED WITH A RITUAL WHERE THE FONT WAS EMPTIED, THEN SAND AND STONES POURED INTO THE BASIN WITH CHILDREN GATHERED AROUND WATCHING AND THE ENTIRE CONGREGATION SINGING "HEALER OF OUR EVERY ILL" from *With One Voice*.)

*Together with the liturgy, music, and spoken words, the environment of our worship space serves as another lens--a way for us to see--and a way for Lent to "speak" its meaning to us.*

This was a powerful beginning to Lent. Our pastor preached about the all too familiar ashes of our lives these last months. To begin the service with imposition of those ashes, then following the homily to go to the font on the way to communion where the waters of baptism made a watery mess of the sign of our mortality, and then close with the emptying of the font were wonderful visual reminders of this season.