



*Noh Bo Academy students keep Ash Wednesday in
St Gabriel's Church, Noh Bo*

***“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
Turn away from your sin and be faithful to Christ.”***

I love Ash Wednesday.

I love it because it is so counter cultural. It provides a refreshing antidote to the vanities of the world around us.

God's value system is quite contrary to the world's way of thinking. "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, **take up his cross** daily and follow me,' said Jesus (Luke 9:23). Self-denial, taking up one's cross, service before self - not comfortable listening. And if we're honest, not easy advice for any of us to follow. How do we possibly do that?

The words that we use in the "ashing" ceremony remind us of our mortality. Our human bodies are finite. The world, with all its passing fancies is finite. Ash Wednesday reminds us that we are called to serve higher values.

We're human: we can't help but live a large part of our lives thinking about our own needs. It's inevitable. Basic human survival depends upon it. But Ash Wednesday brings us up with a bump. We are not the centre of the universe. As my mother was quick to remind us kids when we got a little over excited about our personal needs, "You're not the only pebble on the beach."

Indeed. We are here to be faithful to Christ.



Ash Wednesday, and the subsequent season of Lent, reminds us that we are just a small part of a wider picture, and that words such as “service”, “modesty” and “humility” should feature highly in our vocabulary. God calls us to work together to build His kingdom. I well remember a phrase from a church report, published long ago when I was still a student. The report has been long forgotten, but this phrase has stuck with me:

*“Every baptised Christian is baptised for service.”
(John Tiller, 1983).*

“Every baptised Christian....”, not just those who happen to be employed full-time to work for the church; not just those who serve on church committees; not just those who appear to be over-zealous about asserting their faith.... every baptised Christian.

We live in a world where might is right. To be successful, you’ve got to promote yourself, show a bit of self-aggrandisement. You’ve got to get on, assert your rights, promote your own self-interest. Greatness is based on position, power, and title. Fight for what you want, trample over other people, and come out on top. And we can even justify that way of thinking by saying things like: “God helps those who help themselves”.

What we so easily forget is that along with privilege goes responsibility.

We have been granted the most enormous privilege – the free gift of eternal life. As Paul reminds us, we have been saved, “by grace through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). We are saved by the sheer love of God, shown to us in the willingness of Jesus to submit himself to the agony of the cross, and to die in our place. Let us never ever doubt that. Salvation is a free gift. There is nothing we can do to earn it. People often ask me, “I want to become a Christian. What do I need to do?” The answer is simple – believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is your Lord. All we can do is open ourselves up to him and receive the privilege of belonging to God’s family.

And yet with privilege there is responsibility. There are implications involved in following Christ. When we have become aware of how much God loves us, and the gift of eternal life that He has granted us, then surely it follows that we will live in a way that honours Him, not because we “ought” or “must” do so, but simply because we will want to do so.

As he so often does, St. Paul expresses this well:

“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ^{then} make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value

others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” (Philippians 2:1-4)

In God’s kingdom, we’re not spectators, we’re servants. We are called to service. Each of us has a unique ministry within the body of Christ. Our focus must be on discerning what it is that God is calling us to do. So easily, we think of life in terms of benefits: what’s in it for me; what will I get out of it? An alternative way to approach life is to consider: “what have I got to give; what service can I be offering to the world around me?”

We begin Lent with ash. We conclude Lent on Maundy Thursday with foot washing. On the night before he died, Jesus knelt down and washed his disciples’ feet – the mark of a true servant, and a model for them, and us, to follow. True humility is about sitting lightly to our own needs, a willingness to put God first, and being available for others. Jesus concluded this foot washing ceremony by telling the disciples: *‘Now that I, your Lord and master have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.’ (John 13:14)*

Let’s make it our prayer that we will use Lent to grow in grace and humility, to grow in love and commitment to God, and to prayerfully consider the ways in which we can be of service to God and to the people around us.

If we can live as humble and loving servants of our Lord, then who knows what God can do in, and through, our church.

So may I wish you a humble, holy, and thought-provoking Lent.



Revd Tim Eady,
Christ Church, Bangkok



Greetings from Christ Church

Father God, You are our rock of ages, yesterday, today and forever.

**We thank you for the building of Christ Church – standing witness
To Your blessings on Your people for a hundred years until now,
And for many years to come.**

**Most of all, Father, we thank you for the thousands of people
Who have come to Christ Church:**

**To minister to Your children and spread Your good news,
To worship you,
For spiritual renewal,
For fellowship,
To serve,
To give,
To seek help.**

**We thank and praise You for our differences in tradition and culture.
Through Your love and in obedience to the teaching of Your gracious Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ, we are able to unite as one people in You.**

**We ask for your continued blessing and guidance
For all who come to Christ Church, whether tourists passing through
Of those for whom Bangkok is home.**

**May Christ be a spiritual oasis,
Where faith is renewed and strengthened
And all who come here bear faithful witness to You – the Father of us all.**

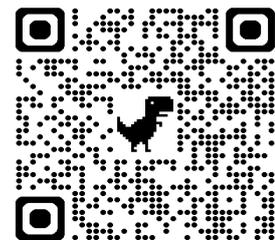
(Miranda Songsiridej, written in 2005 – to mark the centenary of our building)

News from Christ Church

You are welcome at all of our activities:

Electoral Roll sign-ups and Annual General Meeting

- The “Electoral Roll” is a list of church members who are eligible to vote during our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on **26th April** and to serve on the Parochial Church Council (PCC).
- Please note that you need to sign-up again even if you were on the Roll before.
- You can use the QR code or complete the paper forms in the back of the church.
- Sign-ups will be open until **22nd March**.
- Please contact the church office or Electoral Roll Officers (Chris Rall, Annette Sohn, Okey Okafor) if you have questions.



Lent Meetings (English and Thai Congregations)

“Working Together for the Kingdom of God”

A series of Lenten meetings, seeking to bring the English and Thai congregations closer together as we learn more about our various ministries. Each evening will include worship, prayer, discussion and a brief introduction to our churches' various ministries, with time to talk, and coffee! 7pm – 8pm. You are invited to the Li Hall.

Wednesday **25th February**: Shalem House and Bethlehem House

Wednesday **4th March**: The Karen Ministry

Wednesday **11th March**: Community Outreach to the local area

Wednesday **18th March**: Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Bangkok

Wednesday **25th March**: Group visit to Shalem House.

Confirmation

We will hold a Confirmation Service on **3rd May**. If you are interested in knowing more about what it means to be Confirmed, come along to a meeting on Sunday **1st March at 9am**.

“Looking back on a life in Diplomacy” Monday 16th March, at Christ Church 7.30pm

Come and join us for an evening in the company of Brendan Rogers, as he shares his perspectives on his time in SE Asia, and his support for Christ Church's Karen Ministry.

Brendan was Irish Ambassador to Thailand and Myanmar from 2014 to 2018, and a regular worshipper at Christ Church. He left Thailand in 2018 to return to his post as Deputy Head of the Irish Foreign Service and to take charge of Ireland's candidate for a seat on the UN Security Council. In 2021 he became Ireland's Ambassador to the Netherlands and the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (UNOPCW). He also represented Ireland to the International Criminal Court. In his earlier career he was Ambassador in Zambia, Uganda and worked at Irish Missions in the US in Boston and New York.



While in Bangkok he worked closely with Christ Church in assisting Noh Bo Academy on the border with Myanmar.

He recently retired from the foreign service. He will be with us to share his thoughts, take questions and have an open discussion about his time in SE Asia.

Entry is free, and donations will be invited for Christ Church Karen Ministry.