

# MARQUAND READER

Volume 12, Issue 19: Week of February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
The newsletter of Marquand Chapel, Yale Divinity School

## THIS WEEK IN MARQUAND

Services begin at 10:30 a.m. All are welcome!

### Monday February 16th – A Service of the Word

Welcome back from reading week! In this Service of the Word, graduating student David Telfort will preach.

### Tuesday February 17<sup>th</sup> – Mardi Gras

In many Christian cultures, the penitential fast of Lent is anticipated by a last minute feast! In Europe the feast is known as Shrove Tuesday; in America, it became Fat Tuesday, or Mardi Gras. We will mark this feast day with color, catharsis, and disorderly conduct, ending with Coffee Hour celebrated in Marquand Chapel.

### Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday

During this Ash Wednesday service, the mandate to "remember that you are dust" during the imposition of ashes reminds us of our sinfulness and vulnerability before God, and of our unity with the earth. Preacher: Norman Wirzba.

### Thursday February 19<sup>th</sup> – Sung Morning Prayer

This first Sung Morning Prayer of Lent, "Hymns and Spirituals", will draw on Lenten themes. Professor Almeda Wright will offer a reflection.

### Friday February 20<sup>th</sup> – Lunar New Year Community Eucharist

In China and throughout much of East Asia, an elaborate 15-day festival marks the turning of the traditional Lunar New Year. Led by Asian members of our student body, we will worship God together with traditional dance and song. We welcome Reverend Dae Joon Roh of the New Haven Korean Church (Presbyterian) who will preside at the Lord's Table. Graduating student Mark Koyama will preach.

The Marquand Chapel Team, 2014-15			
Faculty, staff and visiting musicians		Student team members	
Maggi Dawn	Dean of Chapel	Emilie Casey, Mark Koyama, Adam Perez, Joshua Rio-Ross, Victoria Larson	Chapel Ministers
Sara O'Bryan	Interim Director of Chapel Music	Wesley Hall, Patrick Kreeger Jacob Street	Organ Scholars
Christa Swenson	Liturgical Coordinator	Jeremiah Wright-Haynes	Chapel musician
Mark Miller	Marquand Gospel & Inspirational Ensemble Director	Christian Crocker, Sarah Paquet	Chapel Choir Directors
Marcus Johnson, Calvin Sellars, Abigail Zsiga, Tobey Drums, Andrew Zsigmond	Visiting Chapel Musicians	Kenyon Adams, Joshua Sullivan	Student ministers for visual and performance arts

## A Love that is Long: A Lenten Meditation

What is Lent anyway?

The word “lent” derives from the Germanic word *lenz* which means *long*. A later derivation shows up again in Old English as *lencten* which meant “lengthen”, and thus the word “lent” came to refer to springtime—the promise of *lengthening* days.

*Spring!* “When the world,” as E.E. Cummings says “is *puddle-wonderful.*” Sodden patches of green peek out from beneath the furrows of snow that have blanketed the ground winterlong. As the days lengthen, the buds begin to appear on the trees. Crocuses pop up here and there by the wayside. In the middle of doing something or other, we catch a little whiff, a rumor, carried on the wind, of the warmth to come... and we are *transfixed!* Our souls cannot help but respond, yearning for more of this enchantment, more of this intoxicating life.

But even though Lent is named after spring, the Lenten season as observed in the churches’ liturgical calendar, is not exactly spring-like in character. The season lasts forty-six days, beginning on Ash Wednesday and culminating on Easter Sunday. This period corresponds to the last forty days of Jesus’ life, when everything fell apart with a startling swiftness. All four of the gospels dedicate a full third of their respective narratives to the last week of Jesus’ life – as if they are morbidly fascinated by Jesus’ inexorable descent into betrayal, scourge, crucifixion and death.

In the early centuries of the Western church, when the liturgy was enacted entirely in Latin, the period in the liturgical calendar that preceded and included Easter was called *quadragesima* – which means “forty” in Latin. Moses, Elijah, and Jesus, each respectively spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness. Though it is now a contested point, liturgical scholars used to posit that some pre-Nicene communities required their catechumens to observe a forty-day period of penance and fasting as a preparation for baptism on Easter Sunday. If so, it is tempting to imagine that one of these early converts might have had good reason to coin the term “lent.” That’s a *long* time to fast and do penance.

In the coming week, in Marquand Chapel, we will observe two rituals that have their origins in the human experience of the turning seasons – Lent, as we have already observed, and also the Lunar New Year. It seems to me that a Lenten meditation can be built from such a seasonal etymological ground.

Today, the incontrovertible seasonal reality that will not be ignored is this *long* New England winter! It sometimes feels, doesn’t it, that this is our “wilderness” time—longer even than forty days—when we get to have our own charming experience of doing battle with the elements in all their austere ferocity? It is worth remembering (though it is not easy) that all this snow will eventually run off the hills to fill our reservoirs and make the summer resplendent. Lent is a time of contemplation when we make ourselves aware of the difficulties we face, but also a time that culminates in life: a new life in Christ, and the promise of lengthening days.

My mother lived for two years after my father died. During the one spring when she lived with me as my father’s widow, we often took long slow walks. On one of these walks she said to me: “Your father is dead, but he is still with me. This grief is my new way of loving him.” Perhaps Christ is also with us in this way – as a love that outlives death. Perhaps this is another way to understand Lent—as a Love that is long.

Mark Koyama