

40 DAYS OF LENT

ASH WEDNESDAY

Focus on a word or phrase from Genesis 2:4-7

Consider how God brings new life out of ashes and dust
2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Meditate on Isaiah 58:1-12

Spend time with someone from another generation
Colossians 3:1-4

DESERT

Desert experiences in our life can inform our understanding of God's provision and presence. Lent is 40 days we spend in a metaphorical wilderness, or desert as the Bible often refers, with dry mouths, empty stomachs, and open hearts. Let us be intentional these 40 days to focus on Jesus.

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

Focus on a word or phrase from Isaiah 40:1-8

Share with someone your faith journey
Romans 4:13-25

Confess to God in what way you have hardened your heart
Hebrews 3:17-19

Comfort someone with words or actions
Exodus 16

Meditate on Psalm 78:17-41

Pray for people that do not have a home
Psalm 34

Go on a walk and spend time in reflection
Matthew 4:1-11

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

Focus on a word or phrase from Joel 2:12-13

TEMPTATION

Temptation is a very real part of any desert experience but we are reminded even when it strikes at our very core that Jesus fully understands this desert experience. May we seek Jesus in the midst of our temptation.

Ask God how you are being called to follow
Mark 8:31-38

Remember God's faithfulness in your life
1 Corinthians 10:1-7

Meditate on Psalm 121

Share with a friend a resource that has brought you hope
James 1

Pray for God's action in our world
Isaiah 42:1-9

Encourage someone from your faith community
Galatians 6:1-10

AWARENESS

Even in the wilderness God is present. Here is the world, look around and see that God is near.

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

Focus on a word or phrase from 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Pray for your neighbors
Romans 12:9-13

Give thanks for five things
Colossians 3:15-17

Take a picture of God's presence at work in the world
Genesis 28:10-16

Meditate on Exodus 3:1-12

Pray for all of creation
Psalm 146

Look for God's presence
Psalm 84

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Focus on a word or phrase from Matthew 7:25-34

DESIRE

All of us have desires and want certain things for our lives. What are you pursuing with your desires?

Give money so someone hungry may eat
Luke 19:1-10

Ask God for courage
Joshua 1:1-9

Meditate on Mark 4:1-20

Clear time in your schedule this week
Psalm 130

Meet someone new
Ephesians 2:1-10

Get rid of something in your home
Romans 6:1-14

CROSS

As Jesus makes His way to Jerusalem may we consider what it means to be a disciple.

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Focus on a word or phrase from Matthew 16:24-27

Spend 5 minutes in silence
Psalm 51

Pray for Abilene
Zechariah 7:8-10

Write what it means to sacrifice
Mark 10:17-27

Meditate on Romans 8:12-17

Pray for peace
Colossians 1:15-20

Consider where you need forgiveness
Psalm 51

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY
Focus on a word or phrase from Psalm 22

HOLY WEEK

Jerusalem is the destination of our desert journey. The winding road leads us here. This is the place of the cross.

John 12:1-11

John 12:20-36

John 13:21-32

John 13:1-17 & 31-35

John 18:1 - 19:42

John 27:57-66



He is Risen!

The Christian Calendar and Year

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under the heaven.

As you receive your Lenten Calendar and begin the forty-day journey to Easter, it is important that you understand all of the spiritual seasons of the Christian Calendar. The Church established a cycle called the Church Year which helps us focus on the major events in the life of Jesus. The Church Year, or Calendar, gives us a guide for our worship in the sanctuary or as we study scripture at home.

The events in the Bible are not isolated or unconnected stories, but tell the unfolding drama of God's plan to reach and reconcile humankind. Each year, we celebrate the drama of God's work through what is called the Christian Calendar, or Church Year. We have our yearly calendars, which count down the months. Each year, the Christian Calendar provides the amazing journey of reliving the "Good News" of Jesus Christ.

Outlined below are the seasons of the Christian or Church Year. This calendar, with its spiritual seasons, should mark and shape our lives more than the 12-month calendar we normally live by.

ADVENT

Advent comes from the Latin word, *adventus*, which means "a coming." This season includes the four-week preparation before Christmas as we await the coming of Jesus Christ. We light a candle on the Advent Wreath each Sunday in anticipation of the coming event which will bring us peace. This is a season of longing as we think of Israel's captivity and hope of deliverance. It is a season of preparation as we make room for the Christ Child to be born in our lives. Advent helps us offer an alternative to the consumerism and commercialism of Christmas. The color is not red and green, but purple as we prepare with penitent hearts for a King.

EPIPHANY

The term Epiphany comes from the Greek word meaning "manifestation" or "appearing." It reveals that Christ came for all people as the Star appeared to the Magi. We celebrate Epiphany twelve days after the birth of Jesus. This is the season when Christmas really begins. The "Word made flesh" or "Emmanuel – God with us" has now appeared to all people.

ASH WEDNESDAY

This holy day on a Wednesday begins the forty-day journey to Easter, excluding Sundays. This service reminds us of our humanity as we humble ourselves before the Living God. We remember that we are "dust and to dust we shall return." The palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday are burned to provide the ashes. We know the ashes will not save us, just as the water of baptism will not save us. The ashes placed in the sign of the cross on our foreheads symbolize our need for grace and that only the love of God on the cross can save and heal us.

LENT

The word for *Lent* means "the lengthening of days" or "spring." This season calls us to repentance and renewal, which will lead to the "spring" of resurrection and new life. Lent originally served as the Church's first Sunday school as candidates were prepared for their baptism on Easter Sunday. It is a season of discipleship. It is a time for discipline. It is more than just giving something up. Lent is the season to depend solely on the grace of God to fill the emptiness, which we often fill with second-rate stuff. The importance of Lent cannot be overstated since it includes Holy Week, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday – the events in the last week of Jesus of Nazareth – the week that changed the world. Lent is a time for focusing on God's sacrifice.

EASTER

The obvious day of pure celebration. Easter is more than a promise of eternal life. The day reminds us that Christ has been set loose in this world and is waiting to encounter us with new life. The church began to see that every Sunday during the year is Easter. We worship on Sunday to remember that the risen Christ can encounter us anywhere and no tomb could hold Him. Easter is not a day. Easter is never over...it is the continuing hope that Christ reigns.

PENTECOST

Pentecost comes fifty days after Easter. It was originally a Jewish harvest festival that occurred fifty days after Passover. The term "*Pente*" means fifty. Pentecost celebrates the promised coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church as described in Acts 2. At Pentecost, the Church was commissioned to proclaim the gospel to all people. Especially in today's world of division, the hope of Pentecost is that the Spirit gives a common language among the diversity of the nations. Pentecost begins a new understanding of God and the world that breaks down walls. This day is joyful. The color is red, which symbolizes the fire and wind of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came to bring truth, wisdom, and the power of unity in a broken world.

THE SEASON AFTER PENTECOST – CALLED ORDINARY TIME

The season after Pentecost is called "ordinary time," from the word *ordinal*, which means "counted time." This season is "counted time" because it takes us on the journey of the church from Pentecost to Advent. It calls us to "count" and ask, "What time is it in my life?" There is nothing "ordinary" about this season. It calls us to the mission of the church. It invites us to consider our mission and purpose as we hear the stories of Jesus who came to us in "ordinary time."