

# Lent Guide 2024

## About Lent (Modified from the Book of Common Prayer 2019)

The season of Lent is a time of repentance, fasting, and prayer in preparation for Easter Sunday. Observing Lent began in the early days of the church as a time of preparation for those who wanted to be baptized on Easter Sunday. The forty days of Lent – not counting Sundays – are a way of rehearsing Jesus’ forty days of fasting in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13). Fasting is a physical reminder that “man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 8:3). Just like our bodies hunger for food, so much more do our souls long for communion with God. Lenten fasting is more than simply removing something from our daily rhythms for 40 days, but actually aims to fill the space of those good things with prayer and a desire to know Jesus more intimately.

Lent begins each year on Ash Wednesday, a day where, historically, church members would be marked with ashes in the sign of the cross on their foreheads. Throughout the Old Testament, ashes are symbolic of sorrow, grief, and repentance. Christians have traditionally used ashes to indicate grief over sin and as a reminder that the wages of our sin is death (Romans 6:23). Like our first parents, Adam and Eve, we have rebelled against God, and we live under the same judgment, “you are dust, and you will return to dust” (Genesis 3:19). But just as we are under the curse of Adam and Eve, so all followers of Jesus are reminded of the life we share in Christ, the Second Adam (Romans 5:12-6:11).

It is in this sure hope that we begin the journey of these forty days of Lent: that by hearing and answering the Savior’s call to repent, we may enter fully into the joyful celebration of his resurrection on Easter Sunday.

# About the Lent Guide

The aim of this guide is to orient our hearts in the season of Lent toward the cross of Christ through ancient, written prayers and Scripture readings. Each week focuses on one of the major themes of the Lenten season: human mortality (death), repentance, fasting, prayer, generosity, our need for an atoning sacrifice, and Jesus' path to the cross and grave. As we ponder these themes we especially feel the burden of our need for a Savior, and this sobering reminder helps us to feel the weight of glory as we celebrate the resurrection of the Son of God on Easter Sunday morning.

## How to use this guide.

This guide is intended to take our church through 15-20 minutes of daily weekday devotions through the season of Lent. You should start each devotion by slowly reading the prayer for that week (except Holy Week, which has a prayer for each day). We find it to be helpful to read these prayers out loud; hearing ourselves say the words out loud can often serve as a way of reminding our hearts what is true, especially when our circumstances make it difficult to remember the truth we know.

After reading the prayer out loud, you will find a Scripture passage that reflects the week's Lenten theme. You may also find it helpful to journal what you're feeling after the passage. Here are some helpful questions you may consider as you journal through the text:

- How does the passage reflect this week's Lenten theme?
- How does the passage show my need for Jesus?
- Is there a call to forsake sin? Or a command for godly living?
- Does God make a promise to his people?
- How does the passage point to the death and resurrection of Jesus?

# Lent Calendar

Week 1: February 14 - 16

*Memento Mori: "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

**Daily Prayer:** Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

## **Daily Readings**

- **Wednesday:** Genesis 3
- **Thursday:** Job 14
- **Friday:** Ecclesiastes 3

Week 2: February 17 - 24

*Repentance: "Repent because the kingdom of heaven has come near!"*

**Daily Prayer:** Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations, and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **Daily Readings**

- **Monday:** Numbers 21:4-9
- **Tuesday:** 2 Samuel 12:1-17
- **Wednesday:** Matthew 3
- **Thursday:** Acts 17:22-34
- **Friday:** 1 John 2

Week 3: February 25 - March 2

Fasting: "When you fast..."

**Daily Prayer:** Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

**Daily Readings**

- **Monday:** Esther 4
- **Tuesday:** Isaiah 58
- **Wednesday:** Daniel 10
- **Thursday:** Joel 2:12-17
- **Friday:** Matthew 4:1-17

Week 4: March 3 - 9

Prayer: "Whenever you pray, you should pray like this..."

**Daily Prayer:** Heavenly Father, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you: Look with compassion upon the heartfelt desires of your servants, and purify our disordered affections, that we may behold your eternal glory in the face of Christ Jesus; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

**Daily Readings**

- **Monday:** Psalm 4
- **Tuesday:** Psalm 69
- **Wednesday:** John 17
- **Thursday:** Hebrews 5:1-10
- **Friday:** James 5

Week 5: March 10 - 16

Generosity: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these... you did for me."

**Daily Prayer:** Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore gives us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Daily Readings**

- **Monday:** Leviticus 19
- **Tuesday:** Deuteronomy 15
- **Wednesday:** Matthew 25
- **Thursday:** Luke 10:25-37
- **Friday:** 1 Timothy 6

Week 6: March 17 - 23

Atonement: "We are healed by his wounds..."

**Daily Prayer:** Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Daily Readings**

- **Monday:** Exodus 12
- **Tuesday:** Leviticus 16
- **Wednesday:** Isaiah 53
- **Thursday:** Hebrews 9
- **Friday:** Revelation 5

Week 7: March 24 - 30

## Holy Week

### PALM SUNDAY

**Daily Prayer:** Almighty and everlasting God, in your tender love for us, you sent your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon himself our nature, and to suffer death upon the Cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and come to share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

**Reading:** John 12

### MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

**Daily Prayer:** Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

**Reading:** Isaiah 42:1-9

### TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

**Daily Prayer:** O Lord our God, whose blessed Son gave his back to be whipped and did not hide his face from shame and spitting: Give us the grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

**Reading:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

### WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

**Daily Prayer:** Assist us mercifully with your grace, Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the meditation of those mighty acts by which you have promised us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

**Reading:** Isaiah 50:4-11

## MAUNDY THURSDAY – The Night Jesus Was Betrayed

**Daily Prayer:** Almighty Father, whose most dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it in thankful remembrance of Jesus Christ our Savior, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

**Reading:** Matthew 26:17-56

## GOOD FRIDAY – Christ’s Death and Crucifixion

**Daily Prayer:** Almighty God, we beseech you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the Cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

**Reading:** Mark 15

## HOLY SATURDAY – Christ’s Descent to the Dead

**Daily Prayer:** O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day and rise with him to newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Reading:** 1 Peter 3:13-22