

THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT



PREPARE YOUR HEART FOR EASTER AT RCPO



WHAT IS LENT?

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are at the heart of the Christian gospel, and Good Friday and Easter are two of the most significant celebrations of the Christian year. Lent is a 40-day season of preparation and repentance during which we anticipate Good Friday and Easter. Just as we carefully prepare for big events in our personal lives, such as a wedding or commencement, Lent is a special time of prayer, repentance, and sacrifice that invites us to remember Jesus' passion and celebrate Jesus' resurrection. People often observe it in specific acts of personal prayer, worship, fasting or repentance.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF LENT?

Since the earliest times of the Church, there is evidence of some kind of Lenten preparation for Easter. Lent became more regularized after the legalization of Christianity in A.D. 313. The practice of a forty-day preparation period began in the Christian church during the third and fourth centuries. The number forty carries biblical significance, including the forty years Israel spent in the wilderness and Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness. The word Lent itself is derived from the Anglo-Saxon words *lencten*, meaning "Spring," and *lenctentid*, which means not only "Springtide" but also was the word for "March," the month in which the majority of Lent falls.

WHY IS RCPO PARTICIPATING IN LENT?

We desire to connect people to the deep traditions of our faith and to bring light and meaning to their practice. Since Restoration began in 2010, we have participated in Advent as a church family — a month-long event to prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas. Believing the resurrection of Jesus and its celebration at Easter to be an just as central to our faith, we desire to expand on its celebration at Restoration as well. Lent is not just a Catholic tradition — many Protestant congregations also observe Lent. Lent is also not a requirement for the Christian life — it is simply a chance to call our hearts to reflection and action. It is setting aside days in our calendar to be intentionally grateful for the cross of Christ and to desire that others would be drawn to the sacrifice and victory over sin that happened there.



FORTY DAYS OF LENT

The forty days of Lent begin on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 14 this year) and continue through Holy Week and Easter, not counting Sundays, which are reserved for celebratory worship. At Restoration, we are focusing our period of Lent on both our own repentance from sin and on leading others to the same freedom and life in Christ. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Restoration offers these daily suggestions to help you prepare your heart for Easter.



FEBRUARY 14 Ash Wednesday; read Isaiah 40:3-8 and contemplate a world longing for the coming of their Savior.

FEBRUARY 15 Build a Lenten playlist that you listen to often during these 40 days. Use worship songs you love.

FEBRUARY 16 Place a cross somewhere where you will see it regularly during Lent.

FEBRUARY 17 Spend a day with no screens — computer, phone or TV. Pray for someone every time you wish you could turn it on.

FEBRUARY 18 Thank a volunteer at church today — someone teaching your kids, greeting your family, setting up or tearing down equipment, serving in the band or in the tech teams. Express your gratitude for their commitment to serve.

FEBRUARY 19 Identify a family member, friend, neighbor or co-worker you could invite to Easter services with you. Pray for the opportunity to ask them.

FEBRUARY 20 Slowly pray through the sections of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). Write down ways that each part of the prayer could change your life.

FEBRUARY 21 Don't spend money on food or drink for yourself today. Look for someone in need to offer what you would have spent on yourself, or donate what you would have spent to an organization that feeds the hungry.

FEBRUARY 22 Hand write a note to someone, encouraging them.

FEBRUARY 23 Confess what's on your heart and any sin to your spouse or close friend. Read 1 John 1 together.

FEBRUARY 24 Wake up earlier than needed. Use the time to be quiet and to pray Psalm 40.

FEBRUARY 25 Show up five minutes early to church to sit quietly in the theater and and to pray for the service.

FEBRUARY 26 Be conscious of anyone you are angry with or have not forgiven. Meditate on the cross of Jesus and practice forgiving them.

FEBRUARY 27 Spend at least 20 minutes outside, enjoying and thanking God for the beauty of His creation.

FEBRUARY 28 Walk around your block. Pray for the people in each house.

MARCH 1 Bless someone today with a secret act of kindness or generosity.

MARCH 2 Read Psalm 25, or use a Bible app to listen to it read aloud.

MARCH 3 Set an extra place at your dinner table as a reminder to pray God would fill up the emptiness of those in need.

MARCH 4 Strengthen the family of God: meet someone new today at church.

MARCH 5 Fast for the day (or at least a meal) and ask God to nourish you with His words and presence and will.

MARCH 6 Pray for an enemy. Not for God to change them — for God to bless them.



MARCH 7 Wear simple clothes and no jewelry today as a symbol of mourning the death and brokenness of our lives and the world.

MARCH 8 Fill a trash bag with clothes or items you no longer use and donate them to others who can use them.

MARCH 9 Pray prayers of blessing over your family and friends.

MARCH 10 Memorize Romans 8:1-2.

MARCH 11 Mindfully take communion at worship today. Reflect intently on Christ's death on your behalf and His forgiveness of all your sins.

MARCH 12 Make a conscious choice to put yourself last today — give up your seat, go to the back of line, park in the farthest spot.

MARCH 13 Read Luke 15 slowly and ask God how you should respond. Pray for those who are lost.

MARCH 14 Do something kind for a co-worker with whom you don't always see eye to eye.

MARCH 15 Invite friends into your home or chosen space and practice hospitality.

MARCH 16 Pray for an extended time — at least 30 minutes.

MARCH 17 Haven't asked that person from Feb. 19th to Easter with you yet? Do it today.

MARCH 18 Share something you learned in the sermon today via email, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram to encourage your friends. Tag Restoration Church Port Orange so we can see it.

MARCH 19 Ask God to reveal the sins you commit that aren't the ones you immediately think of. He's covered those, too.

MARCH 20 Offer to buy Easter basket goodies for a family that is struggling financially.

MARCH 21 Write down sins that are struggles for you. Ask for forgiveness and burn the paper.

MARCH 22 Go to your favorite news site on the web and pray through the articles for the peace of the world.

MARCH 23 Give an undeserved gift.

MARCH 24 Turn off the Internet for the day.

MARCH 25 Worship on Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week.

MARCH 26 Replace your complaints today with gratitude.

MARCH 27 Read Psalm 139.

MARCH 28 Spend 15 minutes in silence. Try no radio on your commute.

MARCH 29 Pray about which one of these Lenten practices you'd like to keep in your life for good.

MARCH 30 Read John 19 and reflect on the day that Jesus went to the cross for the sins of the world.

MARCH 31 Anticipate Easter Sunday. Imagine what it would be like to believe Christ is dead and all hope is lost, as the disciples did on this day.

EASTER He is risen indeed! Join your Restoration family to celebrate His love and victory together.

