



## Lent Reading & Prayer Guide

February 14 - April 1, 2018

*Willamette*  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

## **What is Lent?**

The tradition of Lent originated in the early church. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 40 days (excluding Sundays) before Easter/Resurrection Sunday. The number 40 reminds us of certain events in the Bible such as days of rain when Noah was in the ark, years that the nation of Israel wandered in the wilderness, and the days that Jesus spent in the desert prior to His ministry. Regardless of your experience with Lent, we invite you into this purposeful time of anticipating the resurrection of Christ.

## **Our Journey toward Resurrection Sunday:**

Our lives are full of stories; we watch TV shows, we go to the movies, we read books. But the best stories are the ones that pull us in, the ones that show us how we are a part of the story. Often we reach Resurrection Sunday and parachute into the story. That's a bit like trying to enjoy a good book when you've only read the final chapters. Our desire is to **FOCUS** on Jesus and enter into the story that led Him to the cross. We hope you will contemplate Jesus' suffering and pain and sacrifice and love in a new way. We hope that you will be in prayer and read about Jesus each week. We will conclude the Lent season with a Good Friday service, **FOCUSING** on Jesus and His work on the cross. At the end of this season, we hope to have a new perspective when we come to celebrate the *Resurrection!*

## **Our Theme during this year's Lent season:**

As we prepare our hearts and enter the story of Jesus going to the cross, we want to **FOCUS** on prayer. Each Sunday during Lent we will look at a different aspect of prayer from the Gospel of Matthew to **FOCUS** our lives on Jesus.

## **What is Ash Wednesday? Feb. 14, 7:00 p.m.**

Ash Wednesday is a tradition that churches have held for many years. In the Old Testament ashes were used for two purposes: as a sign of humility and mortality, and as a sign of sorrow and repentance for sin. While this is the purpose of the ashes, it is also the purpose of Ash Wednesday service. Contemplating our own sin and how it leads to death are the opening chapters of our story. If we don't understand our own sin and its consequence of death, we will never understand why Jesus would journey toward his own death.

## **What is fasting?**

Fasting and prayer have been central components to the season of Lent. Fasting is the discipline of abstaining, doing without. In a fast, the believer chooses, for a set time, to do without something that is hard to do without. When we understand and use fasting in this way, it can **FOCUS** on Jesus: to better hear from Him and to reach deeper intimacy with Him.

## **What do I fast from (do I have to fast)?**

You can fast from anything (and you do not have to), but the most common fast is from food, because of its connection to our flesh. Sometimes fasting can lend itself to a works-oriented faith (thinking that we can somehow work our way to God), but this is not the purpose of fasting. The whole idea behind fasting is that when you desire what you are fasting from, you instead turn to God in prayer.

## **What is Good Friday? March 30, 7:00 p.m.**

Good Friday is the Friday before Resurrection Sunday and memorializes the day of Jesus' death on the cross. It is typically a somber day. But just like Ash Wednesday, Good Friday reminds us of why the following Sunday is such a great day.

## **What is Resurrection Sunday? April 1, 9:00/10:45 a.m.**

Easter/Resurrection Sunday is a day of celebration where we remember the victory of Jesus. He was miraculously raised from the dead to announce His defeat over sin and death, displaying the power of God that is now available for us to live victoriously.

## **What is the Reading and Prayer Guide?**

On the following pages you will find the Reading and Prayer Guide. As we prepare to celebrate Jesus' resurrection, take some time each day, by yourself, with a friend, or with your family to **FOCUS** on the theme for that day. The readings and prayer themes are designed to help you see Christ more clearly.

**Feb. 14: Ash Wednesday Service** Psalm 51:1-12

Pray that we would start Lent season by acknowledging our sinfulness and our need for Jesus to save us and create a right spirit within us.

**Feb. 15: The Greatest Commandment** Matthew 22:37-39; Deut. 6:5

Pray that we will love God (commit ourselves to Him) with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Pray that God's Spirit will work in our heart with power and that we will value and follow biblical priorities.

**Feb. 16: Strong Character and Integrity** 1 Peter 2:11-12

Pray that we will cultivate strong character and uncompromising integrity. Pray that our testimony will be genuine and that we will never do anything that we would need to hide from others.

**Feb. 17: Pursuing Christ-likeness** Mark 1:35; Heb. 12:1-3

Pray for our personal walk with God—that our soul and spirit will be nourished and strengthened in our quiet time with God. Pray that we will focus on spending quality time in the Word of God.

**Feb. 18: Sunday Worship Gathering**

**Feb. 19: Access to the Father** Ephesians 2:18; Hebrews 10:19-23

Pray that we would enjoy and appreciate the privilege of entering into God's presence.

**Feb. 20: Prayer and Worship** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Pray that we will be people of prayer and worship and that we will keep our focus on Jesus and walk in a close relationship with Him.

**Feb. 21: Seeking God's Will** Luke 9:23–24

Pray that we will earnestly seek God's will and be committed to instant and complete obedience—ready for God to work powerfully in and through our ministry.

**Feb. 22: Growing in Humility** Micah 6:8

Pray that we will be humble and authentic in our faith, not given to pride or hypocrisy. Pray that we will have pure motives and give God glory for every gain or victory.

**Feb. 23: Financial Provision and Wisdom** Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:6–11

Ask God to provide for our financial needs. Pray that we will be content with what we have and wise stewards of our finances.

**Feb. 24: Protection from Evil** John 17:15; Psalm 9:9–10; Rom. 16:19-20  
Ask God to protect us from the evil plots of Satan. Pray that we will not be corrupted as we rub shoulders with the world.

### **Feb. 25: Sunday Worship Gathering**

**Feb. 26: Seeking God** Matthew. 6:25-34; Hebrews 12:1-3  
Pray that we will continually seek God and focus on Him rather than the world and its distractions.

**Feb. 27: A Growing Faith** Proverbs 3:5–6  
Pray that we will be a trusting people and have a passionate love for God, not giving in to worries, fears, or an uptight and anxious spirit.

**Feb. 28: Growing in Discernment** James 1:5–6  
Pray that we will counsel and teach with discernment through the wise use of Scripture and faith in God's power to work. Pray that we will be protected from the effects of sinful or negative attitudes that we encounter.

**Mar. 1: A Strong Marriage** Ephesians 5:23–33  
Ask God to protect our marriages and keep them strong as a model of Christ's relationship with the Church. Pray that we will tenderly love and respect our spouse and that we will honor one another above ourselves. For those not married, pray for your relationships with loved ones and other close relationships.

**Mar. 2: A Strong Family** Ephesians 6:1-4  
Pray for our children and especially that the pressures of the life will not discourage or embitter them. Pray that we will provide godly leadership in the home, not based on fear of what others will think, but according to scriptural truth. For those who do not have children, pray that God will give them many "spiritual children" as they share the gospel.

**Mar. 3: Deep Friendships** John 15:13-15; Proverbs 17:17  
Pray that God will provide godly friends and encouragers to us and our family, in order to strengthen our relationships so that we can serve God in greater ways together.

### **Mar. 4: Sunday Worship Gathering**

**Mar. 5: Have Mercy on me!** Matt. 9:27-31; Hebrews 4:15-16  
Pray that we would be humble to call out for God. That we would see our need to receive His mercy and His grace in our various times of need.

**Mar. 6: A Heart for Revival** Psalm 69:32; Psalm 71:20

Pray that God will be merciful to us as we seek Him for personal revival and revival in our church and community.

**Mar. 7: A Heart of Service** Matthew 20:25-28

Pray that God will be merciful to us, giving us His heart of service for Him, for others, and for our world.

**Mar. 8: Protection in relationships** 2 Cor. 10:4–5; Eph. 5:15-18; 6:10-13

Pray that God will be merciful to us, protecting our marriages. Pray that we will be aware of the potential for any improper relationships. Pray that our family time will be protected. For those not married, pray for our relationships with loved ones and other close relationships.

**Mar. 9: Focused Vision** Col. 1:28; Eph. 4:25

Pray that God will be merciful to us, giving us a clear, biblical vision of what we are called to do today and every day, for His glory and for the sake of others.

**Mar. 10: Fearing God** Gal. 1:10; Prov. 9:10; 2 Tim. 1:6-7;

Pray that God will be merciful to us to focus on the Word of God and walk in the fear of the Lord—rather than fear of man. Pray that we will seek to please God rather than men and pursue holiness rather than the praise of men.

**Mar. 11: Sunday Worship Gathering**

**Mar. 12: I need to be alone!** Matthew 14:13, 22-23; Psalm 46:10

Pray that we would make the time and have the discipline to get alone with God. That we would push out distractions and seek times to be alone and quiet before God, that He may strengthen us and give us focus for His work.

**Mar. 13: A Guarded Heart** Ephesians 6:10–18; Prov. 4:20-23

Pray that we will guard our heart in a world with so many technological distractions and bombardments. Pray that we will wear the armor of God so that we will be morally pure, not fall into sexual temptation, and use our free time well.

**Mar. 14: Keeping a Balanced Life** 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Pray that we will make wise lifestyle choices in order to protect our health, especially in the areas of exercise, eating moderately, and getting sufficient rest. Pray for times of relaxation and renewal to balance the stress of life.

**Mar. 15: Using Time Wisely** Ephesians 5:15–16

Pray that we will use wise time management and that we will seek God's perspective for our schedule, guarding our time against unnecessary interruptions.

**Mar. 16: The Mind of Christ** Colossians 2:6–8

Pray that we will think biblically, with the mind of Christ in every situation that we encounter.

**Mar. 17: Enduring difficulties** James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-9

Pray that we will not give in to discouragement, but that we will deal with inevitable criticism and conflict by committing ourselves into the hands of God, who judges righteously.

**Mar. 18: Sunday Worship Gathering**

**Mar. 19: Thank you very much!** Psalm 136

Give thanks to God for His faithful and enduring love to you. He is love and He is committed to you.

**Mar. 20: A Grateful Heart** Psalm 103:1-6

Give thanks to God for the many specific blessings that He has poured out in your life.

**Mar. 21: Leading/Parenting as a Shepherd** Heb. 13:17; Deut. 6:6-7

Give thanks to God for the leaders He has placed in your life; and pray that we will lead and parent with a shepherd's heart and that we will always speak the truth in love.

**Mar. 22: Unity** 1 Corinthians 1:10, 12:18-27

Thank God for the unity that He provides in your home and in our church. Pray for spiritual unity in our church. Pray that the enemy will not be allowed to create divisions or misunderstanding among the church leaders.

**Mar. 23: Work Wholeheartedly** Colossians 3:23–24

Thank God for the ability to serve Him. Pray that we will strive to give our best efforts for His Kingdom, His people, and His glory.

**Mar. 24: In the middle of trials** 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Romans 5:3-5

Thank God that He is faithful to love you and be with you. Pray that we will continue to give Him thanks even in the midst of trials for we know that He is working His good plan in us.

## Mar. 25: Sunday Worship Gathering

### Mar. 26: Not my will Mt. 26:36-46

Pray that God will give you the strength and courage to seek His will not your own.

### Mar. 27: The Great Commission Mathew 28:19-20

Pray that we will be "Great Commission people"—committed to personal evangelism and the equipping of the saints to seek the lost. Pray that we will have a heart to develop a thriving missions program in our church.

### Mar. 28: Courageously proclaiming God's Word Colossians 4:2-6

Pray that we will be courageous in proclaiming Christ and confident in our use of the Word of God. Ask God to help us speak with insight, transparency, and humility.

### Mar. 29: Evangelism opportunities 2 Cor. 5:11, 20-21

Pray that we will have our eyes open to whom God would providentially place in our lives, that we may show them the love of Jesus, and meet their needs, and explain the love of God for them.

### Mar. 30: Good Friday service 7pm Matthew 27:32-51

Pray that we would remain faith to God in the midst of every tribulation. Pray that we would remember the victory of the empty tomb when we only see the defeat of the bloody cross.

### Mar. 31: Waiting 2 Peter 3:9-13; Titus 2:11-14

Pray that we will wait patiently on the God whom we know is with us and working out things for good. Pray that we will not be discourage while we wait but that our faith would grow in God, that we would trust in His perfect timing.

## April 1: Resurrection Sunday!



7:00 p.m.



7:00 p.m.



9:00 & 10:45 a.m.