

The Season of Lent

Lent is the season where we identify with the passion and death of Jesus. Its aim is the renewal of our faith. Lent begins with a special day of repentance on Ash Wednesday and concludes with the crucifixion of our Lord on Good Friday.

The Lenten season developed over a thousand years or so. It began as an observance lasting 40 hours in the church of the first century because the Lord's body rested in the tomb that length of time between burial and resurrection. Later, the season was stretched to six days of fasting and special observance called Holy Week. In the fourth century, Holy Week was practiced in Jerusalem by going to various sites associated with the passion of our Lord, later referred to as the stations of the cross.

Next, six days grew into 36 days, a tithe of the number of the days in the year. Around 730 A.D., four days were added to total 40. The significance of 40 refers to the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, the 40 days Moses was on Mount Sinai to receive the commandments and the 40 days our Lord was tempted by Satan.

Sundays were never considered a part of Lent, since Sunday was always celebrated as the Lord's resurrection day. The purpose of Lent is to help us enter the redemptive drama of Christ's death. The aim is transformation and renewal. Lent helps us experience anew the death and resurrection of our Lord.



ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026
12:00 Noon
100 Main at McGaughey
Dyersburg, Tennessee

+ Please stand in body or in spirit.
Bold words are spoken responsively.

Welcome

+ Call to Worship

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And, also, with you.

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

God's mercy endures forever. Amen.

+ Opening Prayer

+ Gospel Reading Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 NRSV
¹“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²So, whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. ⁵And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father, who is in secret, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. ¹⁹Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust

consume and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Response to the Word

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Homily

Invitation to Lenten Discipline

Thanksgiving Over the Ashes

Imposition of Ashes

You are invited to come forward to receive the ashes and kneel at the chancel rail for prayer.

Invitation to Holy Communion

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness

Sharing the Peace of Christ

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And, also, with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing ... And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn, saying:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

...in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith. **Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

...Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

+ Benediction

You are invited to stay here to pray as long as you wish. When you exit this space, please do so in silence.