



2021

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An Introduction to Lent

The forty-day period between Ash Wednesday and Easter, known as Lent, was historically a period of preparation for “catechumens,” those persons seeking baptism into the life of the church at Easter. As infant baptisms increased, eventually Lent became a season of self-examination, penitence, and special devotion for all Christians as they prepare for Easter and to more fully experience the Resurrection of Jesus.

Lent is more than just a season of fasting and abstinence; it is an opportunity for significant spiritual growth. The Orthodox theologian, Alexander Schmemmann, describes Lent as “the school of repentance which alone will make it possible to receive Easter not as mere permission to eat, to drink, and to relax, but indeed as the end of the ‘old’ in us, as our entrance into the ‘new’ life we have in Jesus.”

Lent, then, is rooted in an essential aspect of what it is to be a Christian: repentance. *Metanoia* in Greek, often translated “repentance,” literally means changing one’s mind or turning in a new direction. In this season, we recommit to the movement which should be the spiritual rhythm of our lives: the continuous turning away from sin and turning towards God. The reality is that we keep “changing our minds” most effectively by regular, small actions (i.e. habits) which form us as disciples and strengthen our trust in God. Lent, then, is about our continuing conversion to Christ.

This is why, during Lent, we re-dedicate ourselves to habits like corporate worship, private prayer, reading and study, confession, and service, even making them a bit more stringent as a means to restore vibrancy, life, and passion in our relationship with God. In short, we are hoping to make our hearts and souls bigger, to create more space for God in our lives.

This “turning around” is not just a time of fasting and self-denial. It is the time where we, the people of God, return to life as He originally intended. During Lent, we are invited to recover the ancient rhythms of life that we lose through overstimulation and busyness.

In earlier times, Lent was a discipline taken on by the entirety of a community or even a whole society. It was something which everyone did together, supporting each other in living the season. One might think of this as a kind of spiritual teamwork, and like anything done as a team, it bound people together and helped create community. However, in our 21st century world, opportunities for real community are scarce. Even Christianity is often now seen as a smorgasbord of spiritual options rather than a family bound by common practice. This makes keeping a rhythm of life that supports discipleship increasingly difficult.

We offer an alternative in Lent at St. B’s, so that each of us will have the opportunity to experience something of the mutual support and shared structure on which vital Christian life depends. Rather than each of us choosing an individual discipline for these 40 days, we invite you to shape your Lent around communal habits of fasting, praying, serving, and connecting.

A Lighter Lent

The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten* meaning lengthen, or specifically, the lengthening of days and the time of year we now call spring. The liturgical season of Lent intentionally coincides with the time of year when the days lengthen and the light grows stronger.

Life is already heavy with the continuing pandemic, effects of natural disasters, political tensions, and amplified racial injustice. What if Lent this year was about creating space for the light of Christ to lengthen and grow stronger in our own lives? What if a holy Lent this year was a *Lighter Lent*?

Come to me, all you that are weary and are
carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you
rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me...
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is *light*.
-Jesus

Matthew 11:28-30

Carving Out Sacred Space

In Homes

We are a sacramental people. To carve out sacred space in our homes is to make room for God physically. Sacramentally it says, “We welcome you here, in this place.” Whether it be the dining room table, a chair, a desk, a corner, or a closet, carve out a sacred space in your home this Lent. Physically make room for Christ, our light, to take residence.

In Time

We are also a praying people that belong to a tradition that carves sacred space into time. Fixed-Hour prayer, or what we call The Daily Office (Morning, Noonday, Evening, & Night (Compline) Prayer) was born in intentional communities of people who gathered to do the work of God in the form of reading Scripture, offering prayers, singing praises, and affirming faith in the Triune God. This Lent, carve out sacred space in time, by reading the St. B’s Daily or joining Morning Prayer & Compline on Facebook Live, allowing Jesus the opportunity to *(en)lighten* the daily load.

The St. B’s Daily will focus on one reading and one word through Lent. Not only does this “lighten” the word content, literally, it also gives us a communal focal point for daily reflection.

Morning Prayer & Compline will continue on Facebook Live led by staff. Set an alarm to step out of the traffic and into our sanctuary carved into time.

1 p.m. What began in March of last year at the onset of the lockdown continues during Lent. If you haven’t already, set an alarm for 1 p.m. and stop wherever you are to pray for St. Bartholomew’s and remember that you are not alone.

In Action

In the pages that follow, are practices that carve out space (literally in some cases) for the transforming light of Christ to enter and diffuse through your body, mind, heart, spirit, and life.

Reflect Daily

This Lent, we have chosen one reading from the lectionary and one word from that reading for us to reflect on together and apart. The St. B's Daily will include a 50 word reflection expanding on the word.

Read the entire lesson listed and reflect on the **word of the day**. You might respond to the word of the day through journaling, drawing, taking photos, or being quiet. Conclude your reflection each day with the prayer listed below the words and readings.

Fast Weekly

Fasting is traditionally associated with Lent, and so each week, we will fast from a particular pleasure. When we fast, we are reminded spiritually and even physically of our weakness, our finitude, and our need for God. So when we are tempted to break out fast, pray to God for strength to hold to it. In fasting we once again physically and tangibly carve out space for the light of Christ to dwell in us.

Fasting comes in many shapes and forms. For some, abstaining from food completely or from entire meals is not a good idea. Please adapt the fasts so that they pull you towards the path of health and life.

All Sundays are “feast” days when, in celebration of the Resurrection, we break our fasts. You may, also, choose to do each of the suggested communal fasts for one week only; or you may let them build on each other, so that by the end of Lent you are doing all six fasts at the same time.

Serve Weekly

To complement each weekly fast is a weekly way to serve. C. S. Lewis wrote that "Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different than it was before." These small acts of weekly service can amount to big changes of heart and mind.

Connect Weekly

We would be amiss if we neglected to consider the circumstances that surround us in the age of COVID-19. For all, connecting with others (especially in our church family) has been significantly limited in the past year. For some, the ensuing isolation and loneliness is still painful and crippling. So, weekly, we provide someone to connect with the old-fashioned way: snail mail.

Final Thought

We suggest that on Sundays you make it a point to decide on the specifics of your week. How will you fast? When will you serve? Who will you send a note to?

Other *Lighter* Opportunities

A Lighter Lent Book Study Sunday at 11 a.m. on Zoom

Rev. Serena will lead a discussion on [Love Is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubled Times](#) by our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. This accessible book with vivid stories from Bishop Curry's life and strong Biblical roots will lead us into conversation on making a difference in this world through hope, resilience, wisdom, faith, respect for human dignity, and choosing love. We will meet by Zoom at 11am on the first 5 Sundays of Lent, beginning Feb. 21. Order this book from our Gallery for \$18 (only a few cents more than Amazon's price). Join us!

A Lighter Lent Playlist

Once again the staff have compiled a playlist for the season before us. You can find the playlist on Spotify and Apple Music. Find the links on the home page of www.stbs.net or search: *A Lighter Lent For St. B's 2021*

Day of Reconciliation, Wednesday, March 31

The sacramental rite, Reconciliation of a Penitent, will be offered on Wednesday of Holy Week. The rite creates space to confess to God, in the presence of a priest, the ways we miss the mark and to receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution. Clergy will be available at the prayer desks on either side of the altar rail in the sanctuary to hear your confession and offer forgiveness on behalf of the church. *Preparation sheets will be available ahead of time. Look for the sign-up closer to the date.*

I invite you, therefore, in the name of
the Church, to the observance of a
holy Lent, by self-examination and
repentance; by prayer, fasting, and
self-denial; and by reading and
meditating on God's holy Word...

BCP p. 265

Ash Wednesday Week

Reflect:

Read the lesson listed and reflect on the word of the day. Respond to the word of the day through journaling, drawing, taking photos, meditating, or being quiet. Conclude your reflection each day with the prayer listed below the words and readings.

Wednesday, February 17..... *Treasure* Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21
Thursday, February 18 *Testify* John 1:29-34
Friday, February 19 *Follow* John 1:35-42
Saturday, February 20 *Find* John 1:43-51

Pray Daily:

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ashes

Lent begins with the imposition of ashes as a sign of our mortality and penitence for our sins. As we receive the ashes, we hear the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The ashes are imposed in the form of a cross, pointing to our great hope in the grace of God through the Cross of Christ which grants us a sharing in the power of his Resurrection.

Fast:

Traditionally, the church has fasted from all food on Ash Wednesday to remind us that our physical hunger for food points to our greater spiritual hunger for God. If you are unable to fast for the entire day, then consider fasting from a meal or a food group (like meat or carbs or even all “solids”). Alternatively, fast from snacking between meals or consider drinking only water today.

Serve:

To compliment this week’s fast, we suggest giving some food away. It might be bringing some items to the church for St. Luke’s Food Pantry. It might be something for Room in the Inn. Get creative. We suggest that it is food that you would like to be eating.

Connect:

Write a note this week to someone from the St. B’s family who is in poor health or struggling in some way.

Week 1

Reflect:

Read the lesson listed and reflect on the word of the day. Respond to the word of the day through journaling, drawing, taking photos, meditating, or being quiet. Conclude your reflection each day with the prayer listed below the words and readings.

- Monday, February 22 *Reveal* John 2:1-12
Tuesday, February 23 *Temple* John 2:13-22
Wednesday, February 24 *Enter* John 2:23-3:15
Thursday, February 25 *Love* John 3:16-21
Friday, February 26 *Grace* Hebrews 4:11-16
Saturday, February 27 *Source* Hebrews 5:1-10

Pray Daily:

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.

Fast:

This week, resolve to avoid any type of sweets or dessert. This could mean no latte in the morning or no chocolate in the evening. Notice what happens inside when you are denied something you've become accustomed to or something you really want.

Serve:

Bake a sweet treat for a neighbor or someone you don't know very well.

Connect:

Send a note this week to someone in the St. B's family that lives alone.

Week 2

Reflect:

Read the lesson listed and reflect on the word of the day. Respond to the word of the day through journaling, drawing, taking photos, meditating, or being quiet. Conclude your reflection each day with the prayer listed below the words and readings.

Monday, March 1 *Come* John 4:27-42

Tuesday, March 2 *Live* John 4:43-54

Wednesday, March 3 *Walk* John 5:1-18

Thursday, March 4 *Astonish* John 5:19-29

Friday, March 5 *Seek* John 5:30-47

Saturday, March 6 *Time* John 7:1-13

Pray Daily:

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Fast:

This week, forego your usual television shows, Youtube channels, Netflix bingeing, podcasts, gaming, and the like. Fast from things that entertain and allow you to escape and check out from life. What does it feel like to increase the silence in your life? Ask yourself what silence does for you and spend the time listening for the voice of God.

Serve:

Use the time that you might usually spend watching a show, listening to a podcast, or gaming, to care for God's creation. Pick up trash along a roadway or in a park. Maybe do it in silence, listening for the voice of God.

Connect:

This week send a note to someone from the St. B's family you haven't seen in a long time.

Week 3

Reflect:

Read the lesson listed and reflect on the word of the day. Respond to the word of the day through journaling, drawing, taking photos, meditating, or being quiet. Conclude your reflection each day with the prayer listed below the words and readings.

- Monday, March 8 *Knowing John 7:14-36*
Tuesday, March 9 *Living Water John 7:37-52*
Wednesday, March 10 *Light John 8:12-20*
Thursday, March 11 *Truth John 8:21-32*
Friday, March 12 *Alive Romans 6:1-11*
Saturday, March 13 *Gift Romans 6:12-23*

Pray Daily:

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 which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Fast:

This week, turn off Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, and internet news. Fast from texting. Connect through phone calls instead. Make meal time screen free. Do your best to check and respond only to necessary work emails. What does it feel like to unplug and disconnect, not to obsessively check email, Facebook, etc.? Do you feel cut off . . . or free?

Serve:

This week, *call* an old friend, someone you haven't seen in a while, or an older family member or parishioner. If they don't pick up, leave a message of love and support. Afterward, spend time praying for that person.

Connect:

This week send a note to someone in the St. B's family who is grieving a loved one or difficult situation.

Week 4

Reflect:

Read the lesson listed and reflect on the word of the day. Respond to the word of the day through journaling, drawing, taking photos, meditating, or being quiet. Conclude your reflection each day with the prayer listed below the words and readings.

Monday, March 15 *Satisfy* John 6:1-15

Tuesday, March 16 *Boat* John 6:16-27

Wednesday, March 17 *Bread* John 6:27-40

Thursday, March 18 *Hope* Romans 8:12-27

Friday, March 19 *Intercede* Romans 8:28-39

Saturday, March 20 *Spirit* Romans 6:60-71

Pray Daily:

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give 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.

Fast:

This week, resolve to spend nothing on yourself except what is absolutely necessary. Buy no new clothes or gadgets, books or music; don't go to movies or buy coffee or snacks. Eat cheaply and save money. Live simply.

Serve:

This week, serve through money you spend. You might buy a copy of *The Contributor* (bonus: learn your vendor's name). You might purchase coffee, tea, chocolate, or other things that bear a "fair trade" logo. You might purchase something from the wish list of Open Table Nashville, St. Luke's Community House, Room in the Inn, or other nonprofit.

Connect:

This week, send a note to someone in the St. B's family who has young children at home.

Week 5

Reflect:

Read the lesson listed and reflect on the word of the day. Respond to the word of the day through journaling, drawing, taking photos, meditating, or being quiet. Conclude your reflection each day with the prayer listed below the words and readings.

- Monday, March 22 *Wash* John 9:1-17
- Tuesday, March 23 *See* John 9:18-41
- Wednesday, March 24 *Shepherd* John 10:1-18
- Thursday, March 25 *Voice* John 10:19-42
- Friday, March 26 *Resurrection* John 11:1-27
- Saturday, March 27 *Unbind* John 11:28-44

Pray Daily:

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 the 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.

Fast:

Choose coffee, alcohol, tea, or cokes and refrain from drinking it this week. If none of these is something you regularly enjoy, choose another “staple” in your diet. Pay attention to what happens when you deny yourself something you routinely enjoy. Turn toward prayer when you have the desire for the thing from which you are fasting.

Serve:

This week, read up on addiction. Consider those who struggle with addiction, maybe someone you love or know. Read the Prayer for the Victims of Addiction on pg. 831 in the BCP. Send an extra note this week to the staff at a local treatment facility or program. Thank them for the care they offer.

Connect:

This week write a note to someone you *admire* in the St. B's family. Bonus: write a note to someone you disagree with.

Holy Week

Reflect:

Read the lesson listed and reflect on the word of the day. Respond to the word of the day through journaling, drawing, taking photos, meditating, or being quiet. Conclude your reflection each day with the prayer listed below the words and readings.

Monday, March 29 *Blessed* John 12:9-19

Tuesday, March 30 *Serve* John 12:20-26

Wednesday, March 31 *Believe* John 12:27-36

Maundy Thursday, April 1 *Glorify* John 17:1-11

Good Friday, April 2 *Garden* John 19:38-42

Holy Saturday, April 3 *Peace* Romans 8:1-11

Pray:

Almighty and ever living God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him 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 also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Fast: Food or Meals

Pick a type of food (like meat or carbs or even all “solids”) and fast from it for the week, or pick a meal to skip entirely on a daily basis. If you skip meals, spend the time you would have spent preparing and eating food to pray, read the Bible or some spiritual classic, or serve others. Alternatively, fast from snacks between meals, eat three simple, basic meals, and drink only water today.

Serve:

This week consider the gift of nourishment and your own access to food. Consider finding a way to help others access nutritious food. Volunteer at St. Luke’s Food Pantry or their Meals on Wheels Program. Look into the Nashville Food Project and sign up to go with the St. B’s team. Or do this within the St. B’s family. Get on the email lists to take a meal when the need arises to newborn families or those who are unwell (contact churchoffice@stbs.net).

Connect:

This week write a note to someone you are *thankful for* in the St. B’s family.

Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still
Even among these rocks,
Our peace in His will...
And let my cry come unto Thee.

T.S. Eliot
Ash Wednesday, Part 6

Holy Week Liturgies

Our Lenten journey culminates in Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday and concluding in the Great Triduum, the three day celebration of Jesus' passion and Resurrection.

Holy Week offers the invitation to walk with Jesus through the last week of His life and to actually take part in the story that changes everything. In doing this, we remember that redemption didn't just happen over 2000 years ago on a hill called Golgotha, but redemption happens today in Nashville, TN and in a people called St. Bartholomew's.

Holy Week 2021: Though we are uncertain as to how Holy Week will happen, we are certain that it will happen. The following descriptions are written as if we will be in-person. We hope this will be the case in at least some capacity.

March 28 | Palm Sunday

Take part in the story by waving a palm branch and singing Hosanna, and by listening to the reading of the Passion narrative and crying "crucify."

Worship on Palm Sunday begins with the Liturgy of the Palms, as we remember how Jesus entered Jerusalem to the laying down of palms and shouts of "Hosanna," battle cries of a people who believed their King was about to claim back their "Holy City," not die on a cross. The tone of the liturgy changes following the Procession of the Palms with the reading of the Passion Gospel.

The Triduum

The Triduum is one liturgy that extends over the evenings of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

April 1 | Maundy Thursday

Take part in the story by washing feet, gathering at the table, and watching the sanctuary stripped bare.

Maundy is the Latin word for command (*mandatum*), and it refers to the command given by Jesus to his disciples to love one another on the night Christ washed the disciple's feet and transformed the Passover meal. This part of the Triduum invites us to participate in this mandate by washing each other's feet. The evening also celebrates the institution of the Holy Eucharist. Following communion, a time of watching, waiting, and contemplating begins, as the altar and sanctuary are stripped bare commemorating Christ who was stripped of his clothes.

Keep Watch | April 1, 9 p.m. – April 2, Noon

We remember on Maundy Thursday not only Christ's call to wash each other's feet, but also his call to keep watch and pray with him in the garden. A prayer vigil is held following the service and continuing through noon on Good Friday, the hour when Jesus was nailed to the Cross.

The sanctuary will remain unlocked through the night. Sign-ups will be circulated for shifts to keep the watch.

April 2 | Good Friday

Our Holy Week liturgy continues on Good Friday. Take part in the story as we carry the cross around the stations and as we kneel before the empty cross during the Liturgy.

The Good Friday Liturgy

This part of the Triduum dates back to the third century and marks the solemnity of this day. The Passion and death of our Lord are read from the Gospel of John, followed by a homily and what is known as the Solemn Collects. The prayers of the people call us to remember our responsibility to continue the mission of Jesus in the wake of his death. Communion is served from the reserved sacrament and the liturgy concludes in silence.

Stations of the Cross | Good Friday

This liturgy's roots can be traced back to people who made actual pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the earliest years of the Church. It is a way of praying through Christ's journey to the cross, from his arrest through his passion, without having to actually travel to the holy city. Whenever possible, Stations is held outside around the walking path. We share in carrying a large wooden cross from station to station.

April 3, Holy Saturday | Easter Vigil

Our Holy Week liturgy concludes with the Easter Vigil. Take part in the story by sitting in the dark and watching the light fill the sanctuary, hearing the story of salvation, renewing our baptismal vows, and celebrating the first Eucharist of Easter.

The Easter Vigil contains some of the oldest prayers and rituals in the Christian tradition. The liturgy is made up of four parts, the first being the Service of Light: A fire is kindled in the back of the church, marking the resurrection of Christ sometime in the night. From this fire, the Paschal Candle is lit and then the congregant's candles. The second part is the Service of the Word where we hear the story of salvation told through the reading of lessons. Thirdly, the liturgy unfolds with baptisms and our own recommitment to Christ, His church, and His mission in the world. Finally, the liturgy concludes with the first Eucharist of Easter.

April 4 | Easter Day

Stand with Mary at the empty tomb declaring Christ is risen again. Hear the trumpets sound and sing alleluia! We may not know how we will celebrate Easter but be assured, we will proclaim together, "The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia. Alleluia."



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