

LENT

A SEASON OF RENEWAL

Lent 2024

Next week we will be entering the season of Lent, the 40 days (excluding Sundays) beginning on Ash Wednesday and leading up to Easter Sunday. Lent is first and foremost about the gospel making its way deeper into our lives. It's a season that serves as a unique time of preparation and repentance as we prepare to celebrate once again the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Some evangelical traditions reject Lent and the notion of the church calendar all together, believing that Sunday—the Lord's Day—is the only God-given measure of time for the church. Indeed, the Puritans discarded all special holidays, including Christmas, based on this principle. The reality is, we all organize our lives according to some seasonal calendar that's not prescribed by God, such as semesters, financial quarters, weeks, and months.

Recognizing this, the church's liturgical calendar seeks to order time around the major events of our redemption in Christ. During the different seasons of the liturgical year, certain theological emphases, spiritual practices, and corresponding emotions are encouraged to instruct and train believers in godliness. Doing this doesn't limit the celebration of a truth or the experience of a particular emotion to one season or day. For instance, observing Easter Sunday as a joyous and festive holy day doesn't deny that every Sunday celebrates Jesus' resurrection. Rather, a joyous Easter Sunday anchors and gives shape to all other Sundays throughout the year. So it is with the entire liturgical calendar, including the season of Lent.

Lent is an invitation to prepare, to take stock of our lives, and to reconsider how we're living in light of God's presence and power made available to us in Christ. It calls us to reflect on our lives as they are, and, more importantly, as they could be. The ultimate purpose of Lent is to re-orient our lives God-ward. This re-orientation and focus on the things of God often happens best when, like Jesus, we are led into the wilderness. As we read in **Matthew 4:1-2**; **"Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights..."**

In some seasons in our life we can find ourselves in a "wilderness experience," which can be described as a period of time when we, like Jesus, experience testing, trials, and spiritual attack. In a season like this we can feel far from God, spiritually dry, or that our prayers are going nowhere. We can also experience a sort of spiritual depression, and find it difficult to know the joy of the Lord. This can lead to feelings of confusion or doubt about our purpose and direction in life, and cause us to question God's goodness and love for us. Wilderness experiences often appear out of nowhere, following a "mountain top experience" when we feel close to God. After such a high, the valley of a wilderness experience can feel especially low.

As difficult as they may be, wilderness experiences are common in the life of all believers and are necessary for moulding us into the person that God wants us to be and to equip us to endure and have victory over future battles in life; for in that setting of barren emptiness and hardship we learn to rely on God for our needs and to choose to obey Him even when our judgement suggests the opposite. As such, a wilderness experience can either be positive or negative depending on how we respond to it. We may either backslide and experience a setback in our spiritual growth and maturity, or see it as an opportunity for God to build our character and help us to grow in our relationship with Him.



Our aim during Lent is something like a wilderness experience. We want to shake up our lives significantly enough so that when we reach for our usual comforts and grasp a fistful of air, we're forced to cling to Christ. We want to see just how upside down our world really is as our "important things" prove to be perishable goods, as God's light shines on our "righteousness" and exposes the layers of "self" beneath the surface, demonstrating that our "busy" lives could benefit from some godly wisdom.

Our ultimate purpose in going through the wilderness is a new perspective on life, a view into the vast world of God, a deep breath and long look above the tree line of self-absorption. And so, in Lent we focus on getting away from the life of the flesh and into the life of the Spirit, denying our fleshy ways and embracing God's. We often do this by giving things up or denying ourselves certain pleasures. The point, however, of giving things up isn't to be reminded of how much we miss them, but rather to show how dependant we are on them instead of on God, and to be awakened to how much we miss God and long for His life-giving Spirit. This means, then, that Lent isn't only about giving up things, but also about adding things—God-things. Consider the following questions:

Having given up junk food for a healthy diet, what will you do with the energy you gain?

Having given up social media, to whom will you devote meaningful conversation?

Having given up screens as a default activity, how will you use that time to cultivate quality family time?

Having given up isolation, how will you immerse yourself in intentional community?

Having given up business, what might God reveal in the solitude?

Having given up shopping, how will you reach out to others?

Having sacrificed whatever form of selfishness you indulge, how will you meet the needs of others?

The practice of giving something up for Lent is a way of entering into the wilderness with Jesus, so you needn't worry about whether your sacrifice is a good one. It's not a contest! Instead, focus on getting to know Christ more fully, and trust Him to lead you. Seek to replace that thing you've given up with a greater devotion to Christ—to His Word and His mission. God may lead you to give up and take up more as you go. That's good. Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus!

Lent is the launching pad for the life of the disciple to be continued daily after Easter. With that in mind, may we intentionally observe a holy Lent, may we journey as one voice and one Body, and may we proclaim Jesus' resurrection with renewed boldness, power, and joy this Easter!

Faithfully,

The Rev. Canon Christopher R. Doering +
Rector & Lead Pastor





Ash Wednesday

“Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return”

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season—a season that begins with dust and ashes—an ancient tradition, symbolizing our humility before God. The Ash Wednesday liturgy calls us to see ourselves as we truly are; to reflect on our attitudes, actions, and priorities; and to return to God through penitence and prayer. Ash Wednesday is the beginning of a 40 day journey—a journey from repentance to restoration, from darkness to light, from fear to love, from mourning to celebration, and from ashes to joy.

Ash Wednesday Worship

Wednesday, February 14, 2024 @ 7:00 PM
Senior’s Centre ~ Frontenac Room

Loonies For Lent

Almsgiving is a common practice during Lent. Moved by the sacrifice of Jesus, many Christians respond to the needs of others by intentionally giving their time, talent, and treasures to others, as an act of generosity and sacrifice. Film canisters are available at the Welcome table. Please take them home and fill them with your loonies (or toonies!) and return them Easter Sunday. All donations will go to support the **Grace Fund**, which is used at the Rector’s discretion to help people inside and outside the parish who are in financial need.



**KEEP
CALM
AND
OBSERVE
LENT**



Faith Explored ~ “The Lenten Collects”

**Sunday Mornings in Lent
beginning
Sunday, February 18
@
9:00 AM**

Join us for Adult Sunday School as Tucker Carrington continues his teaching on the Collect prayers in the Book of Common Prayer 2019 by focusing on the Lenten Collects.

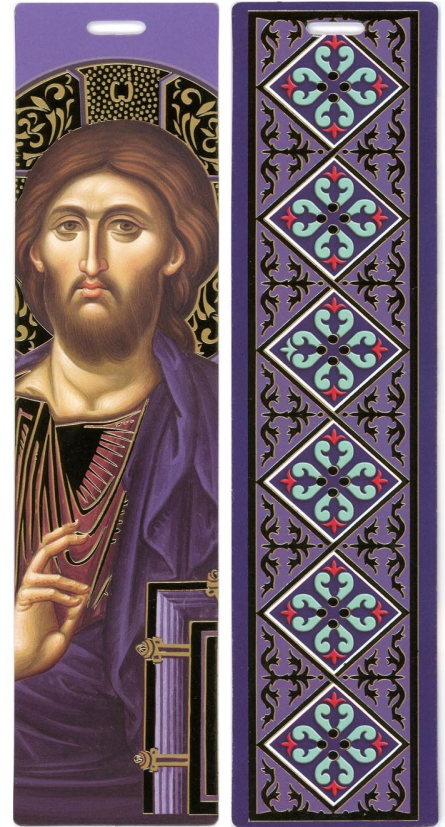
“Listening to Jesus” Lenten Sermon Series

**“Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him.’”
(Mark 9:7)**

In his book, *Letters to Marc About Jesus*, Henri Nouwen, writes this about the importance of listening to Jesus’ voice; “You need to set aside some time every day for active listening to Jesus, if only for ten minutes. Ten minutes each day for Jesus alone can bring about a radical change in your life.” Although this is great advice, it is easier said than done—especially in the midst of all the other voices that compete for our time and attention. Learning to listen Jesus’ voice is a spiritual discipline that is developed over time, and requires us to become comfortable with stillness and silence. However, the more we seek to stop and listen to Jesus’ voice, the more attentiveness will become a habit of our heart. And the greater the habit, the greater the transformation we’ll see. For the more we listen to Jesus, the more like Him we’ll become!

The season of Lent provides us with an excellent opportunity to develop this spiritual discipline, as we seek to listen anew to the voice of Jesus. This 5-week sermon series invites us to listen to Jesus speaking to us through the Gospel. As we do, several Lenten themes begin to emerge that can help us in our Lenten preparations as we journey with Jesus to Jerusalem, and from the glory of the palms to the glory of the resurrection, by way of the dark road of suffering and death.

This series will help us to draw closer to Jesus this Lenten season, as we engage in the discipline of “holy” listening, reflect on Jesus’ words of comfort and love, and receive peace and rest for our hearts.



“The ALPHA Course” Tuesday Evenings in Lent

What is my purpose? • Is Jesus still relevant? • Is God present in my suffering? • How can I have hope? • What’s with the Bible?

Answers to these and other questions of life can be found in the Alpha program. Alpha is a teaching series that explores the basics of the Christian faith. Through video teaching and discussion, Alpha provides a space to ask all your questions about life, faith, and God in an open, friendly, and informal environment with people who, like you, want to explore. Each Alpha session includes, a short video with inspiring teaching, stories, and interviews from all around the world, time to connect, and plenty of time to discuss.

The Alpha course is an excellent introduction to people who are new to the faith and a refresher course seasoned believers. It is also a great way to focus on the discipline of spiritual growth and maturity during the season of Lent.

**Join us Tuesday evenings in Lent at 7:00 PM, beginning Tuesday, February 20 at the Rector’s House: 726 Chatsworth Place.
Tea and dessert will be provided.**



“The Teachings of Jesus” ~ Daily Readings for Lent



Jesus spent much of His time here on earth teaching people about Himself, about His Father, about themselves and about the plan of salvation that was about to come to completion in Him through His suffering, death, and resurrection. Take a moment each day of Lent to learn something from our Saviour, as recorded in Scripture, which serves as the textbook of our faith.

✦ Teachings on Mercy ✦

Our Saviour reveals what mercy means.

Ash Wednesday	Matthew 9:9-13
Thursday	Matthew 18:32-35
Friday	Luke 6:32-36
Saturday	Matthew 23:23-24



✦ Teachings on Suffering: The 1st Week of Lent ✦

A cost-benefit analysis on suffering.

Sunday	Mark 8:31-33
Monday	Mark 14:35-36
Tuesday	John 9:1-5
Wednesday	John 16:17-22
Thursday	John 16:29-33
Friday	Matthew 5:10-12
Saturday	Luke 24:25-27



✦ Teachings on Loving Others: The 2nd Week of Lent ✦

The Lord explains the depths of love.

Sunday	John 15:9-15
Monday	Mark 12:28-34
Tuesday	Matthew 5:43-48
Wednesday	Matthew 5:21-24
Thursday	Matthew 5:38-40
Friday	Luke 15:11-20
Saturday	John 13:33-35



✦ Teachings on Prayer: The 3rd Week of Lent ✦

Jesus tells how best to talk to God.

Sunday	Matthew 6:5-13
Monday	Luke 18:1-8
Tuesday	Luke 22:39-46
Wednesday	John 17:1-5
Thursday	John 17:6-18
Friday	John 17:19-26
Saturday	Luke 11:9-13



✦ Teachings on Sacrifice: The 4th Week of Lent ✦

Christ says what we must give up.

Sunday	Mark 12:41-44
Monday	Luke 14:25-27
Tuesday	Matthew 19:16-26
Wednesday	Luke 6:38
Thursday	Matthew 6:16-20
Friday	Mark 10:28-30
Saturday	Matthew 29:9-14



✦ Teachings on Humility: The 5th Week of Lent ✦

Jesus speaks about the humble reward.

Sunday	Matthew 7:1-5
Monday	Luke 18:10-15
Tuesday	Matthew 20:24-28
Wednesday	Luke 14:9-11
Thursday	Matthew 8:5-13
Friday	Mark 9:34-40
Saturday	John 13:12-17



✦ Teachings on Following Through: Holy Week ✦

Our Saviour tells us to keep going.

Palm Sunday	Matthew 21:28-32
Monday	Luke 14:28-33
Tuesday	Mark 14:12-25
Wednesday	Luke 9:57-62
Maundy Thursday	Mark 14:32-42
Good Friday	John 19:28-30
Holy Saturday	John 12:1-8
Easter Sunday	John 14:1-4

✦ A Prayer for Light ✦

Almighty and ever-living God, let the radiance of your love scatter the gloom in our hearts and the darkness of sin and death in our lives.

May the light of resurrection dawn within us and bring us to the radiance of eternal life.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.