

The Shape of
Lent

AT ST BARTHOLOMEWS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

fast together *read* together

2018

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 pg. 265

Introduction

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 baptism 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 oneself 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 the habits of corporate worship, private prayer, reading and study, confession, good works and service and make 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. The word Lent actually comes from an old English word meaning “spring.” Lent is more than repentance. It is the springtime of the church, a time of renewal, growth, and strengthening of faith.

In earlier times, Lent was a discipline taken on by the entirety of a community or even a 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, which makes keeping a rhythm of life that supports discipleship increasingly difficult.

We hope to offer an alternative this 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 weekly communal fasts and readings.

The Shape of Lent

Weekly Fasts

Fasting is linked with repentance throughout the Scriptures. When we fast, we are reminded spiritually and even physically of our weakness, our finitude, and our need for God. Each week, we will fast from a particular pleasure. And in doing so we physically and tangibly open up space for God to fill.

Fasting can take many shapes and forms. Fasting in the form of skipping meals or abstaining from food for a set period of time are not disciplines for everyone. In these cases, we have provided alternatives that are manageable for all ages and levels of health. Please adapt the weekly fasts as needed.

All Sundays are “feast” days when, in celebration of the Resurrection, we break our fasts. You may 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.

Daily Readings

During Lent, we will be reading a common set of Scriptures together. On each day we will read about twenty to forty verses. Read the Psalm for the week, and then read and meditate upon the reading given for the day. You may wish to incorporate this in the form for Morning Prayer, which can be found in the Book of Common Prayer on pg. 75. This year’s readings will take us through salvation history, beginning with creation and moving towards the climax of God’s redemption and the beginning of the new creation through Jesus’ death and resurrection. The St. B’s Daily email will include reflections on these Lenten readings instead of the usual Daily Office readings.

Lenten Prayer

Traditionally, prayer goes hand in hand with fasting. To this end please join us on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. during Lent for corporate prayer. Evening Prayer will be held in the sanctuary, February 21 – March 21, lasting for about 20 minutes.

Lectio Divina, an ancient way of praying with the Scriptures, will be held in the Ministry House from 6 – 7 p.m. For more information regarding the Lectio group, please contact David Thornton at thorntonforward@gmail.com.

Lenten Study

On Wednesdays during Lent, February 21 – March 21 at 6:30 p.m., we will offer two opportunities for study. Childcare is available during both studies with registration ahead of time. Please register for either class and/or childcare by emailing churchoffice@stbs.net.

Anglicanism 101: Back to Basics.

Fr. Sammy will be teaching Anglicanism 101, a 6 - 8 week class that explores Anglicanism's rich history, distinct doctrine, and liturgical worship. The class is for adults and teens in 10th -12th grades and serves as preparation for the rite of Confirmation and membership at St. B's. It is also an enjoyable refresher for life long Episcopalians.

Lenten Study:

Fr. Travis will be leading a reflective study based on the fasts and readings in this guidebook. Each Wednesday we will explore how the week's fast is shaping us, study the readings' telling of The Story and discuss our place in it, then conclude by listening and expressing how the Lord is inviting us to respond.

Days of Reconciliation

Wednesday, March 21, 9 a.m. – Noon; 3 - 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 28, 9 a.m. – Noon; 3 - 5:30 p.m.

Although not a mandated sacrament in the Episcopal Church, *The Reconciliation of a Penitent*, will be offered on two different days at the end of Lent. The rite creates space in which those who repent may confess their sins to God in the presence of a priest and 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. Appointments can be made with the clergy for different dates and times.

Bring what's heavy and broken. Bring your confession and your sin. Be heard and be forgiven.

Holy Week

Sunday, March 25 - Saturday, March 31

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 that anchors the church year. Learn more about the Holy Week liturgies on pg. 24.

Our Lenten Journey

ASH WEDNESDAY, February 14 - 17

Fast: A Meal or a Food Group

Read: *The Psalms*

WEEK 1: February 18 - 24

Fast: Sweets & Treats

Read: *The Creation & the Fall*

WEEK 2: February 25 - March 3

Fast: Television/Media

Read: *The Patriarchs & the Exodus*

WEEK 3: March 4 - 10

Fast: Social Media

Read: *The Kings*

WEEK 4: March 11 - 17

Fast: Unnecessary Spending

Read: *The Prophets & the Exile*

WEEK 5: March 18 - 24

Fast: Coffee, Cokes or Alcohol

Read: *The Life & Teachings of Jesus*

Day of Reconciliation

HOLY WEEK: March 25 - 31

Fast: A Meal or a Food Group

Read: *The Passion of Jesus*

Day of Reconciliation

Ash Wednesday

The Readings

Wednesday, February 14 — Psalm 51

Thursday, February 15 – Psalm 103

Friday, February 16 – Psalm 38

Saturday, February 17 – Psalm 78

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.

Pray

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.*

Week 1

The Readings

Psalm of the Week – 104

Sunday, February 18 - Genesis 1:1-2.3

Monday, February 19 – Genesis 2:4-25

Tuesday, February 20 – Genesis 3

Wednesday, February 21 – Genesis 4:1-16, 25-26

Thursday, February 22 – Genesis 6:1-8; 7

Friday, February 23 – Genesis 9:8-17

Saturday, February 24 – Genesis 11:1-9

Fast: Sweats & Treats

This week, resolve to deny yourself 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.

Read: Creation and Fall

In the opening chapters of the Bible, we quickly move from a world where humanity and God walk harmoniously in close relationship, to a fallen world of rebellion, sin, pain, shame, and competition with God. As we make our way through this first week, note how God interacts with his creation and how we respond.

Pray:

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.*

Week 2

The Readings

Psalm of the Week – 136

Sunday, February - Genesis 12:1-3; 15; 22:1-19

Monday, February - Genesis 37:12-28; 41:37-57; 50:15-21

Tuesday, February – Exodus 1: –2:10; 3

Wednesday, February – Exodus 7:1-13; 12; 14:10-31

Thursday, March 1 – Exodus 19:1-6; 20:1-21; 33:1-6

Friday, March 2 – Numbers 13:17–14:11, 26-35

Saturday, March 3 – Deuteronomy 30:11-20

Fast: TV & Media

This week, forego your usual television shows, Youtube channels, Netflix binging, 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.

Read: The Patriarchs and the Exodus

As we saw in the story of the Tower of Babel, the world through pride has become divided. But God has not forsaken his creation. He has begun a rescue mission, a way of putting the world back to the way it ought to be. This began with the call of Abraham and the people of Israel. Focus this week on God's faithfulness to his people.

Pray

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.*

Week 3

The Readings

Psalm of the Week – 72

Sunday, March 4 - Joshua 1:1-9; 6; 24

Monday, March 5 – 1 Samuel 8; 10:17-27; 15

Tuesday, March 6 – 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 17

Wednesday, March 7 – 2 Samuel 7

Thursday, March 8 – 1 Kings 3:1-15; 8:22-26, 46-61

Friday, March 9 – 2 Kings 22:1-2; 23:1-26

Saturday, March 10 – 2 Kings 17:6-23; 24:10-17

Fast: Social Media & Texting

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?

Read: The Kings

As we continue the narrative of salvation history, we see more clearly that the people God has called to participate in his rescue mission are themselves broken people. Israel calls a king, and we read the spectacular promises God makes to David. But as we see the failures of the kings, we ask “Whatever became of those promises?” It appears we need a wholly different kind of king.

Pray:

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.*

Week 4

The Readings

Psalm of the Week – 44

Sunday, March 11 - Hosea 2

Monday, March 12 – Amos 5:1–6:8

Tuesday, March 13 – Isaiah 1:12-31; 35

Wednesday, March 14 – Jeremiah 29:1-14; 31:31-37

Thursday, March 15 – Ezekiel 36:22-36

Friday, March 16 – Nehemiah 2:1-8; 8:1-12; 9

Saturday, March 17 – Zephaniah 3:9-20

Fast: Unnecessary Spending

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.

Read: The Prophets and the Exile

As a result of their idolatry and social injustice, Israel has been sent into exile. They are in a foreign land not as tourists, but as an oppressed people. Listen to the prophets as they declare the sins of God's people. Are we guilty of some of those same sins? Listen also to the hope given by a gracious God who forgives sin and remembers his promise to rescue the world.

Pray:

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.*

Week 5

The Readings

Psalm of the Week – 2

Sunday, March 18 - Luke 2:1-21

Monday, March 19 – Mark 1:1-15

Tuesday, March 20 – Mark 4:1-20

Wednesday, March 21 – Mark 5:1-20

Thursday, March 22 – Mark 8:27–9:13

Friday, March 23 – Mark 9:43-50

Saturday, March 24 – Mark 10:17-45

Fast: Alcohol and Coffee

Choose coffee, alcohol, tea or cokes and refrain from drinking it this week. If neither 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.

Read: The Life & Teachings of Jesus

There is a tangible tension building throughout our readings. Israel is a broken nation. They have gone through the ups and downs of slavery, exodus, monarchy, exile and, finally, return to the land of Israel, although under Roman rule. Israel’s ups and downs mirror the ups and downs of the entire human race. But God’s rescue plan now takes a huge step forward as the Messiah is born

Pray:

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.*

Holy Week

The Readings

Psalm of the Week – 22

Sunday, March 25 - John 12:1-8; 12-26

Monday, March 26 – John 12:27-50

Tuesday, March 27 – John 13:1-30; 16:16-24

Wednesday, March 28 – John 14

Maundy Thursday, March 29 – John 17

Good Friday, March 30 – John 18:1 – 19:30

Holy Saturday, March 31 – John 19:31-42

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.

Read: The Passion of Jesus

Our journey through the narrative of salvation history slows to a crawl as we walk through the last week of Jesus’ life. In Holy Week, we experience the most solemn moments of the liturgical year, but our solemnity is transformed into jubilee as we enter into the fifty-day season of Easter. Take time to refocus and examine your life this week. Be fully present in this final week as salvation history reaches its culmination and fulfillment.

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.*

Live the Story During Holy Week

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 that anchors the church year.

Holy Week offers the invitation to live the story with Jesus through the last week of His life. 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.

Palm Sunday, March 25, 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

Live the story on Palm Sunday by processing with a palm branch and singing Hosanna; by listening to the reading of the Passion narrative and crying "crucify."

Our worship on Palm Sunday begins with the Liturgy of the Palms, as we remember how Jesus entered Jerusalem with shouts of "Hosanna" and the laying down of palms, 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.

Service Note: Children and teens are invited to participate in the liturgy with their families this morning. Formation classes will not be held at either service. Nursery will available at both services for 3 yrs. and under.

The Triduum

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

March 29 | Maundy Thursday | 6:30 p.m.

Live the story on the evening of Maundy Thursday through the washing of feet, Holy Communion, and the stripping of the altar.

The Triduum liturgy begins on Maundy Thursday. 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.

Service Note: Childcare offered for 4 yrs. and under with an RSVP by Sunday, March 25 to churchoffice@stbs.net.

March 30 | Good Friday | 6:30 p.m.

Live the story on the evening of Good Friday as we carry the cross around the stations and during the liturgy as we kneel before the empty cross praying for the life of the world.

The liturgy continues on the evening of Good Friday. 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 is read from the Gospel of John, followed by a homily and what are 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.

Service Note: Childcare offered for 4 yrs. and under with an RSVP by Sunday, March 25 to churchoffice@stbs.net.

Stations of the Cross will be offered at 5:15pm on Good Friday. It is another ancient way of praying through Christ's journey to the cross: from his arrest through his passion. Weather permitting, we follow the stations around the walking path outside sharing the burden of carrying a large wooden cross.

March 30, Holy Saturday | Easter Vigil | 6:30 p.m.

Live the story on Holy Saturday 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.

This Triduum liturgy concludes on Holy Saturday at the Easter Vigil with 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 lit 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.

Service Note: Childcare offered for 4 yrs. and under with an RSVP by Sunday, March 25 to churchoffice@stbs.net. Families and individuals are invited to camp out on the church grounds following the Easter Vigil.



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