

The Shape of
Lent

AT ST BARTHOLOMEWS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

pray . worship . serve

2019

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 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, good works, 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 three communal practices: **Pray. Worship. Serve.**

The Shape of Lent: Pray

Pray for 20 minutes a day

Prayer is how we attend to our relationship with God, spending time with him, offering our attention and energy in response to his grace in our lives. We can do this by praying the Daily Office, with the prayers in *The Shape of Lent* booklets, or in whatever practice of prayer you find meaningful in your own life.

Readings

During Lent, we will read a common set of Scriptures together. This year we have chosen the readings appointed in the daily Episcopal lectionary, most of which will come from the Gospel of John (which the Sunday LifeBuilders class is also studying, by the way). If you choose to make this part of your prayer time, read and meditate upon the reading given for the day, perhaps incorporating this in the form for Morning Prayer, which can be found in the *Book of Common Prayer* on p. 75, or in the Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families on p. 136.

Fasts

Fasting is a way of praying with our bodies and our time. 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. Also, 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.

Prayer with Others

Prayer is not simply an individual practice, it is something we do as a community. **Evening Prayer** will be offered on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. during Lent in Wallace Hall, March 13 – April 10, lasting for about 20 minutes.

In addition, **Morning Prayer**, will continue to be offered Sundays through Fridays at 7 a.m. in the church.

Centering Prayer, a historic way of praying without words in silence, will continue to gather on Sundays in the Rectory at 10:30 a.m. for about 30 minutes.

Lectio Divina, another historic way of praying with the Scriptures, will be held in the Rectory on Wednesdays from 6 – 7 p.m. For more information regarding the Lectio group, please contact Mark Lickey at hmlmd301@hotmail.com.

The Shape of Lent: Worship

Worship 1 Hour a Week

This commitment is to worship every Sunday, unless prevented by good cause. The Prayer Book establishes Holy Eucharist as “the principal act of Christian worship on the Lord’s Day and other major Feasts” for Episcopalians. Worship brings us together as a family to hear our stories re-told, to sing our songs and pray our prayers, and to be nourished by receiving Christ’s body and blood in Holy Communion.

Weekly Services of Holy Eucharist

Sundays at 8:30 & 10:30 a.m.
Wednesdays at 7:30 a.m. & 12:15 p.m.

Day of Reconciliation

Wednesday, April 17, 8 a.m. – Noon; 1 - 6 p.m.

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 receive to 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.

The Shape of Lent: Serve

Serve the Poor 1 Day a Month

This is where the rubber hits the road for the Christian. Jesus cared for the poor and the sick, fed the hungry, and loved the least and the lonely. He calls his followers to do the same. The invitation this Lent is to serve once a month. And the remarkable thing is that in serving the least among us, we find that we are serving Christ himself (Matt. 25.31-46).

Simple Acts of Service

Of course, Christians are called to serve more than once a month, and in more ways than one. 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." To that end, each week, suggestions for small, simple acts of service are provided alongside the readings and fasts.

The Shape of Lent: Life Groups

This Lent we invite you to join a Life Group—small groups of 6-12 people meeting weekly across the city to build relationships as we pray, worship, and serve together. Groups meet for 10 weeks and follow a simple format that creates space for food and fellowship, prayer, conversation, and worship. Conversation will include reflection on our Lenten practices of prayer, worship, and service. We offer both evening and day groups for your convenience. To join a group or for more information, email Fr. Travis at thines@stbs.net.

Ash Wednesday

The Readings

Wednesday, March 6 — Luke 18.9-14

Thursday, March 7 — John 1.29-34

Friday, March 8 — John 1.35-42

Saturday, March 9 — John 1.43-51

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.*

Serve: Make a Date with the Poor

Consider where you would like to spend 1 day serving the poor this Lent. Then go ahead and schedule it on the calendar.

Week 1

The Readings

Sunday, March 10 - Mark 2.18-22

Monday, March 11 – John 2.1-12

Tuesday, March 12 – John 2.13-22

Wednesday, March 13 – John 2.23-3.15

Thursday, March 14 – John 3.16-21

Friday, March 15 – John 3.22-36

Saturday, March 16 – John 4.1-16

Fast: Sweets & 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.

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.*

Serve Your Church

Find a new way to serve St. B's this week. You might volunteer for something new. You might do a project that is needed. You might lend an extra hand to a single parent or spend time with an elderly parishioner. You might do some organizing or cleaning. You might provide snacks or a meal to a group within the church.

Week 2

The Readings

Sunday, March 17 - Mark 3.31-4.9

Monday, March 18 - John 4.27-42

Tuesday, March 19 – John 4.43-54

Wednesday, March 20 – John 5.1-18

Thursday, March 21 – John 5.19-29

Friday, March 22 – John 5.30-47

Saturday, March 23 – John 7.1-13

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.

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.*

Serve Your Neighbor

This week you might send a note of appreciation to someone; you might make cookies, bring flowers, or provide a meal. You might have lunch with someone who lives alone or do research to learn about an issue or group you know little about.

Week 3

The Readings

Sunday, March 24 - Mark 5.1-20

Monday, March 25 – John 7.14-36

Tuesday, March 26 – John 7.37-52

Wednesday, March 27 – John 8.12-20

Thursday, March 28 – John 8.21-32

Friday, March 29 – John 8.33-47

Saturday, March 30 – John 8.47-59

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?

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.*

Serve a Stranger

This week you might strike up a conversation with someone you don't know. You might carry groceries to the car or open the door. When standing in line for a coffee, you might pay for the person's behind you.

Week 4

The Readings

Sunday, March 31 - Mark 8.11-21

Monday, April 1 – John 6.1-15

Tuesday, April 2 – John 6.16-27

Wednesday, April 3 – John 6.27-40

Thursday, April 4 – John 6.41-51

Friday, April 5 – John 6.52-59

Saturday, April 6 – John 6.60-71

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.

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.*

Serve the Poor

This week you might exchange names with a homeless vender on a street corner. You might purchase coffee, tea, chocolate or other things that bear a "fair trade" logo. You might see if Open Table Nashville, St. Luke's Community House, or another nonprofit is in need of particular items. If you have two coats, two purses, two pairs of sneakers, *et cetera* . . . you might give one away.

Week 5

The Readings

Sunday, April 7 - Mark 8.31-9.1

Monday, April 8 – John 9.1-17

Tuesday, April 9 – John 9.18-41

Wednesday, April 10 – John 10.1-18

Thursday, April 11 – John 10.19-42

Friday, April 12 – John 11.1-27

Saturday, April 13 – John 11.28-44

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.

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.*

Serve Creation

This week you might carpool to work. You might carry real silverware so you don't have to use plasticware when eating out. You might use a real mug instead of a styrofoam cup at church. You might challenge yourself to buy no single-use plastic this week (or as little as possible). You might pick up trash in parking lots or on sidewalks.

Holy Week

The Readings

Palm Sunday, April 14 - Matthew 21.12-17

Monday, April 15 – John 12:9-19

Tuesday, April 16 – John 12.20-26

Wednesday, April 17 – John 12.27-36

Maundy Thursday, April 18 – John 17

Good Friday, April 19 – John 19.38-42

Holy Saturday, April 20 – Romans 8.1-11

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.

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.*

Serve Each Other

It's Holy Week, help each other make the services. Offer to pick up an elderly parishioner who doesn't drive at night. Help a single parent sort out bedtimes and childcare. Pick up supper for someone coming straight from work. Invite a neighbor or friend. Help the altar or flower guild prepare for and clean up from services. Help the children's ministry with the Easter Egg Hunt. Bring munchies for those who work the services.

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.

Service Note: Incense will be used during Holy Week. Steps have been taken to reduce the sinus irritation that can be caused by incense. We recommend those effected by it in this way sit on the outside of the pews nearest the windows.

Palm Sunday, April 14, 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 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.

Service Note: Children and teens are invited to participate in the liturgy with their families. 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.

April 18 | Maundy Thursday | 7:00 p.m.

Live the story on the evening of Maundy Thursday through the washing of feet, Holy Communion, and the stripping of the altar. Keep watch with Jesus in the garden through participating in the prayer vigil.

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.

A prayer vigil will be held in the sanctuary beginning after the the liturgy. Sign ups will be available to "keep watch" later in Lent.

Service Note: Childcare offered for 4 yrs. and under with an RSVP by Sunday, April 14 to churchoffice@stbs.net.

April 19 | Good Friday | 5:15 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Live the story on the evening of Good Friday as we carry the cross around the stations at 5:15 p.m. and as we kneel before the empty cross during the Liturgy at 7:00pm.

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 for the 7 p.m. liturgy with an RSVP by Sunday, April 14 to churchoffice@stbs.net.

Stations of the Cross, offered at 5:15pm on Good Friday, 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.

April 20, Holy Saturday | Easter Vigil | 7:00 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 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.

Service Note: Childcare offered for 4 yrs. and under with an RSVP by Sunday, April 14 to churchoffice@stbs.net.

Easter Sunday, April 21, 8:30 & 10:30 a.m.

Live the story on Easter Sunday with the trumpets and choir. Stand with Mary at the empty tomb singing Alleluia, Christ is Risen. Easter Egg hunts for children will be held between services.

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



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EPISCOPAL CHURCH

4800 BELMONT PARK TERRACE
NASHVILLE, TN 37215
615.377.4750 | WWW.STBS.NET