

THE WILDERNESS OF LENT



KEY DATES

February 18

Ash Wednesday

March 29

Palm Sunday

April 2

Maundy Thursday

April 3

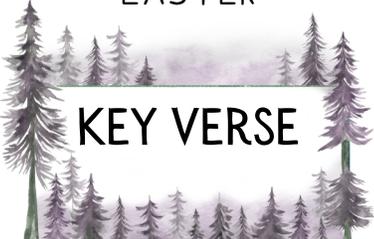
Good Friday

April 4

Holy Saturday

April 5

EASTER



KEY VERSE

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment.
Joel 2:12-13 (NRSV)



THINGS TO SEE

Liturgical Color
Purple

Themes

Repentance, Recommitment,
and Renewal

“NOT ALL WHO WANDER ARE LOST”- ARAGORN, THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING



OVERVIEW

Lent is a season of repentance, recommitment, and renewal. One common image used in Lent is the wilderness, a place where Israel wandered for 40 years, following God, and a place where Jesus was led by the Spirit to prepare for his ministry. The wilderness is a place where we often feel lost, alone, and tested. And yet, it is a normal part of the Christian road.

We wander the wilds of Lent with Jesus, growing in his ways, learning from him, and trusting God to lead us to the Promised Land.



HISTORY

Fasting in preparation for the Feast of the Resurrection (Easter) began in the Early Church. It started with a 40 hour fast from Good Friday to Easter morning, and eventually expanded to a 40 day fast reminiscent of Jesus' fasting in the wilderness (Matthew 4:2). Early Christians would use the season of Lent as the final preparation before one was baptized on Easter, so it is a season that is about three things: the preparation of new converts for baptism, the reconciliation of those estranged from the church, and a general call for the whole church to repent and renew its commitment to Jesus.

LENTEN DISCIPLINES

Below you can find some ideas for traditional Lenten Disciplines.
Remember: You Do Not Win At Lent.

These are not meant to be millstones hung around your neck, feeling like you have to do all of them. Rather, they are examples of different things to inspire you to make a decision that will help you achieve the three goals of lent: Repent of your sin, Recommit to God, and experience the Renewal of God's grace.



FASTING

The purpose of fasting is to remind us that "man does not live by bread alone" (Matt 4:4)

Consider: Cutting out one kind of food from your diet. Fasting from a habit like social media or watching tv, Fasting from a meal like lunch every day, once a week, etc. One full day of fasting per week.

Remember: Sundays are not fasting days!



CHARITY

Fasting is a way to experience solidarity with those who are hungry, but it is incomplete without also seeking to relieve their hunger.

Consider: Calculate how much money you save from not eating or drinking whatever you are fasting from and give that money to a non-profit that is seeking to help people (a food pantry, as an example). Sign up to serve at a Food Pantry or soup Kitchen.



PRAYER

"Prayer is the primary avenue God uses to transform us." (Richard Foster)

Consider: Committing to praying at different times of day. Perhaps every three hours (6, 9, 12, 3, 6, 9), perhaps every day at 6:08 in honor of our area code. Using a guide or a common form of prayer such as the examen.

We have some prayer resources on our website!



STUDY

Use this time to commit to becoming more familiar with the Scriptures.

Consider: Committing to reading 2 chapters of the Gospels a day which will allow you to finish all 4 by Easter. Perhaps you will read a book by a scholar to help you deepen your understanding of some theological or scriptural idea.

Kate Bowler, from Duke University has written a wonderful daily devotional guide that is free for everyone. You can find it on our website.



Want to learn more? Looking for more advice about Lent? Check out the Lenten Road page on our website, or contact the office. We'd love to help!

WESTWOODCHRISTIAN.COM/LENT