
The Old Presbyterian Meeting House
Alexandria, Virginia
Founded 1772

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The Road to Easter

Lenten Readings
from
The Old Presbyterian Meeting House
Alexandria, Virginia

There is no justification without sanctification, no forgiveness without renewal of life, no real faith from which the fruits of new obedience do not grow.

--Martin Luther--

This year, instead of simply listing Lenten readings from the lectionary, we have attempted to link the season of Lent to the ministries of our church. We hope that the readings for the season, combined with the thoughts of members and staff on our liturgy, our educational programs, and our mission activities will provide food for thought as you prepare for the commemoration of the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

March 29: Monday of Holy Week

Ps 51 (morning)
Ps 69:1-23 (evening)
Lam 1:1-12
2Cor 1:1-7
Mark 11:12-25

April 3: Holy Saturday

Ps 95, 88 (morning)
Ps 27 (evening)
Lam 3:37-58
Heb 4:1-16 (morning)
Rom 8:1-11 (evening)

March 30: Tuesday of Holy Week

Ps 6, 12 (morning)
Ps 94 (evening)
Lam 1:17-22
2 Cor 1:8-22
Mark 11:27-33

March 31: Wednesday of Holy Week

Ps 55 (morning)
Ps 74 (evening)
Lam 2:1-9
2 Cor 1:23—2:11
Mark 12:1-11

April 1: Maundy Thursday

Ps 102 (morning)
Ps 142, 143 (evening)
Lam 2:10-18
1 Cor 10:14-17, 11:27-32
Mark 14:12-25

April 2: Good Friday

Ps 95, 22 (morning)
Ps 40, 54 (evening)
Lam 3:1-9, 19-33
1 Pet 1:10-20
John 13:36-38 (morning)
John 19:38-42 (evening)

Through awareness of God's presence...

March 24: Wednesday

Ps 119:145-176 (morning)
Ps 128, 129, 130 (evening)
Exod 7:8-24
2Cor 2:14—3:6
Mark 10:1-16

March 25: Thursday

Ps 131, 132, 133 (morning)
Ps 140, 142 (evening)
Exod 7:25—8:19
2 Cor 3:7-18
Mark 10:17-31

March 26: Friday

Ps 22 (morning)
Ps 141, 143 (evening)
Exod 9:13-35
2 Cor 4:1-12
Mark 10:32-45

March 27: Saturday

Ps 137, 144 (morning)
Ps 42, 43 (evening)
Exod 10:21—11:8
2Cor 4:13-18
Mark 10:46-52

March 28: Palm Sunday

Ps 24, 29 (morning)
Ps 103 (evening)
Zech 9:9-12 (morning)
Zech 12:9—13:9 (evening)
1 Tim 6:12-16
Luke 19:41-48

*He smiles as we blow out our candles,
cheers with us at the game,
cooks our dinner and says grace,
walks down a rainy street in muddy shoes,
or slips on the ice and falls ungracefully.
He sits in the doctor's waiting room,
grieves at the funerals,
holds our hand in the park,
and kisses us goodnight.
He comes
not just on Sundays,
not just on Christmas,
but every time—
someone holds out a hand,
or calls our name,
or asks a favor.*

*Our father, his son, their spirit,
who came on Christmas,
who died for us,
then rose on Easter..
Our father,
who art in heaven..
but who is here—
and now
and always,
hallowed be thy name.
Amen.*

--Mary McElveen--

Through liturgy...

February 17: Ash Wednesday

Psalms 95, 32, 143 (morning)
Psalms 102, 130 (evening)
Amos 5: 6-15
Heb 12:1-14
Luke 18:9-14

February 18: Thursday

Ps 37:1-18 (morning)
Ps 37:19-42 (evening)
Hab 3:1-18
Phil 3:12-21
John 17:1-8

February 19: Friday

Ps 95, 31 (morning)
Ps 35 (evening)
Eze 18:1-4, 25-32
Phil 4:1-9
John 17:9-19

February 20: Saturday

Ps 30, 32 (morning)
Ps 42, 43 (evening)
Eze 39:21-29
Phil 4:10-20
John 17:20-26

February 21: 1st Sunday of Lent

Ps 63,98 (morning)
Ps 103 (evening)
Dan 9:3-10
Heb 2:10-18
John 12:44-50

Across denominations, one of the most satisfying elements in the liturgical reform of the last forty years has been, in my opinion, the renewal of the celebration of the Christian Year. The infinite variety of feasts, fasts, and seasons has been rediscovered, bringing new aural, visual, and tactile experiences to the liturgy. The cycle of the Christian Year has become for many a fruitful way into the mystery of God and the way of Christian discipleship.

If that has been true to some extent of the whole year, from Advent through All Saints and the end of Ordinary Time on Christ the King Sunday, it has been true to the greatest degree of Holy Week and Easter, and of the season of Lent that prepares for them and the Great Fifty Days to Pentecost that arise from them. According to Michael Perham, Bishop of Gloucester, it is through the liturgy of those days the Christian enters more deeply into the experience of 'dying and rising with Christ'.

For some Christians, the meaning and traditions of Lent can be obscure. In light of recent liturgical reforms, many find they are attracted to Lenten themes but don't really know much about the season. In basic terms (according to www.churchyear.net), Lent is the season before Easter lasting from Ash Wednesday until Maundy Thursday, and it symbolically commemorates Jesus' forty-day wilderness fast (see Luke 4:1-13). While Sundays are not numbered in the traditional "forty days" of Lent, they are still part of the Lenten season as seen from their Lenten topics such as sin and forgiveness, temptation, grace, redemption, and the cross. The modern liturgical season lasts 44 days, including Sundays, followed by the Paschal *Triduum* or "three days" of Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter.

The purpose of Lent is to be a season of self-denial, Christian growth, penitence, and simplicity. Lent, which comes from the Teutonic (Germanic) word for springtime, can be viewed as a spiritual spring cleaning: a time for taking spiritual inventory and then cleaning out those things which hinder our corporate and personal relationships with Jesus Christ and our service to him.

—Samuel Baker

Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.
Proverbs 3:7

Confession is the first step to repentance.
English Proverb

February 22: Monday

Ps 41, 52 (morning)
Ps 44 (evening)
Gen 37:1-11
1 Cor 1:1-19
Mark 1:1-13

February 23: Tuesday

Ps 45 (morning)
Ps 47, 48 (evening)
Gen 37:12-24
1 Cor 1:20=31
Mark 1:14-28

February 24: Wednesday

Ps 119:49-72 (morning)
Ps 49, 53 (evening)
Gen 37:25-36
1 Cor 2:1-13
Mark 1:29-45

February 25: Thursday

Ps 50, 59, 60 (morning)
Ps 19, 46 (evening)
Gen 39:1-23
1 Cor 2:14—3:15
Mark 2:1-12

February 26: Friday

Ps 40, 54 (morning)
Ps 51 (evening)
Gen 40:1-23
1 Cor 3:16-23
Mark 2:13-22

March 19: Friday

Ps 107:1-32 (morning)
Ps 107:33-43 (evening)
Exod 2:1-22
1 Cor 12:27—13:3
Mark 9:2-13

March 20: Saturday

Ps 102, 108 (morning)
Ps 33 (evening)
Exod 2:23—3:15
1 Cor 13:1-13
Mark 9:14-29

March 21: 5th Sunday of Lent

Ps 118 (morning)
Ps 145 (evening)
Exod 3:16—4:12
Rom 12:1-12
John 8:46-59

March 22: Monday

Ps 31 (morning)
Ps 35 (evening)
Exod 4:10-31
1 Cor 14:1-19
Mark 9:30-41

March 23: Tuesday

Ps 121, 122, 123 (morning)
Ps 125, 126 (evening)
Exod 5:1—6:1
1 Cor 14:20-40
Mark 9:42-50

Through mission...

**March 14: 4th Sunday of Lent
*Laetare Sunday ("Rejoice!")***

Ps 66, 67 (morning)
Ps 19, 46 (evening)
Gen 48:8-22
Rom 8:11-25
John 6:27-40

March 15: Monday

Ps 89:1-18 (morning)
Ps 89:19-52 (evening)
Gen 49:1-28
1 Cor 10:14—11:1
Mark 7:24-37

March 16: Tuesday

Ps 97, 99, 100 (morning)
Ps 94, 95 (evening)
Gen 49:29—50:14
1 Cor 11:17-34
Mark 8:1-10

March 17: Wednesday

Ps 101, 109 (morning)
Ps 119:121-144 (evening)
Gen 50:15-26
1 Cor 12:1-11
Mark 8:11-26

March 18: Thursday

Ps 69 (morning)
Ps 73 (evening)
Exod 1:6-22
1Cor 12:12-26
Mark 8:27—9:1

During Lent I find I am more aware of the radical nature and personal sacrifice Jesus exemplified in his ministry. I don't have to travel all the way to the cross to be challenged. Every step of his journey retold in the Gospels is a bold reminder that we are called as Christians to step out of our comfort zone and become active participants in this continuing journey to reconcile the world to God.

I wonder what parables Jesus would tell us to wake us up and how he might chide us if he walked alongside us as disciples in our world today. Maybe he would say we have to hold the authorities accountable for social justice just as he did in his day. He would demand to know why we are so timid about speaking up for the poor and misused when we live in the safety of a democracy. He might challenge us with what he risked to speak truth to power in his day. So surely we can tell our city leaders we want respect for public housing residents, dental care for poor adults, and fair treatment for the strangers in our land.

When we are about to give up to "compassion exhaustion" after seeing how great the need is in Haiti or Mexico or Kenya or Virginia, he just might sit us down on another hillside somewhere and teach us again about the abundance we have if we act as a community in our caring. Our mission budget lines could overflow with the miracle of generosity seen in the surplus baskets of loaves and fishes after feeding the five thousand.

Lent is the season for remembering that Jesus did not and does not expect us to play it safe or hold back our love and caring from those in need of our talents and treasure.

--Marsha Rhea

Through Lenten disciplines...

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes at midnight on Easter morning. It is a time of repentance and making changes to become more what God created us to be. The season Lent lasts for the forty weekdays before Easter. The Sundays during Lent are not counted because every Sunday is a little celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

Pastor and theologian Fred Craddock introduces the season of Lent with these words: "Of all the seasons of the Christian's pilgrimage, Lent has probably been most abused. It has in certain times and places become a period of excessive introspection, empty abstinence from tidbits of affluence, and the enjoyment of the glom of self-denial. Correction of such excesses and distortions does not lie, however, in non-observance of Lent, but rather in the recovery of its rich tradition. The image of forty days as a period of engagement with God, of repentance and prayer is deeply imbedded in Scripture." Therefore, the goal in keeping Lent is to find ways to engage with God in new ways. It is a time to stretch our spiritual wings, trying out new ways of praying, and to serve others in Jesus' name.

One way to do this is to commit ourselves and our children to keeping Lenten disciplines. Lenten disciplines are intended to build up, to strengthen faith, to move us closer to God. Three traditional disciplines are prayer, reading scripture and serving others. Each one offers an avenue to grow in faith and deepen one's relationship with God.

--Priscilla Andre-Colton

To change and to change for the better are two different things.

--German proverb--

Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps.

Luke 9:23

March 4: Thursday

Ps 70, 71 (morning)

Ps 74 (evening)

Gen 42:29-38

1 Cor 6:12-30

Mark 4:21-34

March 5: Friday

Ps 69 (morning)

Ps 73 (evening)

Gen 43:1-15

1 Cor 7:1-9

Mark 4:35-41

March 6: Saturday

Ps 75,76 (morning)

Ps 23, 27 (evening)

Gen 43:16-34

1 Cor 7:10-24

Mark 5:1-20

March 7: 3rd Sunday of Lent

Ps 93, 96 (morning)

Ps 34 (evening)

Gen 44:1-17

Rom 8:1-10

John 5:25-29

March 8: Monday

Ps 80 (morning)

Ps 77, 79 (evening)

Gen 44:18-34

1 Cor 7:25-31

Mark 5:21-43

March 9: Tuesday

Ps 78:1-39 (morning)

Ps 78:40-72 (evening)

Gen 45:1-15

1 Cor 7:32-40

Mark 6:1-13

March 10: Wednesday

Ps 119:97-120 (morning)

Ps 81, 82 (evening)

Gen 45:16-28

1 Cor 8:1-13

Mark 6:13-29

March 11: Thursday

Ps 42, 43 (morning)

Ps 85, 86 (evening)

Gen 46:1-7, 28-34

1 Cor 9:1-15

Mark 6:30-46

March 12: Friday

Ps 88 (morning)

Ps 91, 92 (evening)

Gen 47:1-26

1 Cor 9:16-27

Mark 6:47-56

March 13: Saturday

Ps 87, 90 (morning)

Ps 136 (evening)

Gen 47:27--48:7

1Cor 10:1-13

Mark 7:1-23