



LENT

The Season of Lent*

Lent is a forty-day period before Easter. It always begins on Ash Wednesday (this year, Wednesday, February 22), and ends on Holy Saturday (this year, April 7). (Because Sundays are a day to celebrate Jesus' resurrection, we skip Sundays when we count the forty days.)

Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. Lent is a season of soul-searching and repentance. It is a season for reflection and taking stock.

By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days. Lent has been observed in the church since apostolic times.

What's the reason for ashes on Ash Wednesday?

Jesus retreated into the wilderness and fasted for forty days to prepare for his ministry. It was for him a time of contemplation, reflection, and preparation.

By observing Lent, most Christians join Jesus on his retreat. In ancient times, people marked times of fasting, prayer, repentance, and remorse by placing ashes on their foreheads, as in 2 Samuel 13:19, Esther 4:1-3, Job 42:6, and Jeremiah 6:26. This scriptural custom entered the church from Judaism, and it is most appropriate on Ash Wednesday, when we begin a period of sober reflection, self-examination, and spiritual redirection.

Traditionally, the ashes for the Ash Wednesday service come from burning the palm fronds from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration.

Some people only celebrate the happy times in Jesus' life: Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, and Christmas. But as true friends, we should also watch and pray with Him on Maundy Thursday, stand by Him at the cross on Good Friday, and retreat with Him into the wilderness during Lent.

While St. James' offers four services on Ash Wednesday, weekday work schedules and business commitments often prevent a number of St. James' parishioners at worshipping here in their home parish on Ash Wednesday. Many of our parishioners work in downtown Washington, at the Pentagon, in Tyson's Corner, or at Dulles International Airport. Please refer to the green sheet on the table in the rear of the church for a sampling of selected Episcopal churches in these areas as parishes that may be convenient places of worship on Ash Wednesday.

Shrove Tuesday

In many countries, the last day before Lent (called Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday, Carnival, or Fasching) has become a last fling before the solemnity of Lent. For centuries, it was customary to fast by abstaining from meat during Lent, which is why some people call the festival *Carnival*, which is Latin for *farewell to meat*.

*This material directly quoted or indebted to the Rev. Kenneth W. Collings, *The Season of Lent*, copyright 1995-2004; used by permission; all rights reserved.

Worship During Lent and Holy Week

Wednesday, February 22: Ash Wednesday

- 6:30 a.m.: Holy Eucharist & Imposition of Ashes
12:00 Noon: Holy Eucharist & Imposition of Ashes
6:00 p.m.: Children's Liturgy with Imposition of Ashes
7:30 p.m.: Holy Eucharist & Imposition of Ashes

Sunday, February 26: First Sunday in Lent*

Sunday, March 4: Second Sunday in Lent*

Sunday, March 11: Third Sunday in Lent*

Sunday, March 18: Fourth Sunday in Lent*

Sunday, March 25: Fifth Sunday in Lent*

Sunday, April 1: Palm Sunday*

Thursday, April 5: Maundy Thursday

- 7:30 p.m. Liturgy for Maundy Thursday with Foot Washing and Stripping of the Altar
8:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. All-Night Prayer Vigil before the Altar of Repose

Friday, April 6: Good Friday

- 6:30 a.m. Liturgy for Good Friday
12:00 Noon The Three Holy Hours, with Guided Meditations and Silence to 3:00 p.m.
6:00 p.m. Children's Good Friday Liturgy
7:30 p.m. Liturgy for Good Friday

Sunday, April 8: Easter Sunday

- 5:30 a.m. The Great Vigil of Easter and Holy Eucharist
7:30 a.m. Festive Celebration of Easter Sunday
9:00 a.m. Festive Celebration of Easter Sunday
11:15 a.m. Festive Celebration of Easter Sunday

**Our normal Sunday service schedule is:*

7:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist

9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Children's Chapel

10:10 a.m. Adult Forum, Sunday School

11:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Children's Chapel, & Prayers for Healing