

FORTY DAYS OF LENT

Lent: Why We Do What We Do

Between the ashes of Ash Wednesday and the alleluias of Easter there is a journey that Christ invites us to take with him. The Lenten journey calls for self-examination and repentance. It calls for confession, fasting, prayer and giving to the poor. It calls us to travel with an incarnate God, who deep in the flesh, immersed himself in the pain and suffering of the human race.

The forty days of Lent (the six Sundays in Lent are not counted as part of Lent, since every Sunday is a celebration of the Resurrection) make up a season that is more somber and reflective. Worship at St. Mark's and most churches is different during Lent:

- Crosses are draped in purple as a reminder that we are in a season of austerity, purification and spiritual cleansing.
- The absence of flowers reminds us of the somber nature of this season.
- Purple, the color of repentance and solemnity, is the color of Lent.
- We sing less in Lent, and we are more intentional with silence that invites reflection and prayer as we worship together.
- The words of the liturgy also change. On the First Sunday in Lent, we open with the chanting of the Great Litany. This ancient prayer has been sung or said in procession by Christians since 380 and has been included in every version of *The Book of Common Prayer* since its first edition in 1549. The Penitential Order begins the service for remaining Sundays in Lent. This order places the Confession of Sin at the beginning and also includes the recitation of the Ten Commandments or Decalogue and a reading of the Exhortation.

Ash Wednesday Services

Begin your Lenten journey with worship, Holy Eucharist and the imposition of ashes at St. Mark's. An important day of Christian obligation, Ash Wednesday services will be held Wednesday, February 22: 7 a.m., 8:25 a.m., 10 a.m., and 7 p.m. (with choir and music).

Grace for the Season

Join us Wednesdays, 6:30-8:00 p.m., for the Grace for the Season series.

The Gospel of Luke, led by the Rev. Jim Cook, continues throughout Lent, February 29 to March 28. This Bible study provides interpretation, historical and contextual commentary on the gospel of Luke. Please bring a Bible with you (any translation). No previous 'Bible experience' required.

Love Unknown, written by Carmelite bestselling author, Ruth Burrows, has been commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury for reading and study during Lent. This series will explore the author's belief "that many people, even regular churchgoers, miss the true meaning and joy of Christianity." The book is available for purchase, \$10, in the church office. For information, refer to the *Grace for the Season* brochure on our website, <http://church.stmarkspb.org/>, or contact the church office, 622.0956.

Women's Monday Bible Study

The role of women in the Bible, the church and world is wrought with conflict and controversy. What can we learn from looking at Biblical women and how they have helped shape our faith? Join us for *Biblical Women*, led by the **Rev. Peggy Tuttle** on Mondays, February 27 through March 26, 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon in the Parish Library. Stories of many women have been minimized or overlooked, yet provide great insights for us. The Rev. Peggy Tuttle, former associate rector who served with the Rev. Jim Cook in Minnetonka, MN, will facilitate. The recommended book for this study, "The Scarlet Cord," by the Rev. Lindsay Hardin Freeman, can be purchased on Amazon.com.

Stations of the Cross

An outdoor, reflective service, Stations of the Cross, will be held 6 p.m. in St. Mark's courtyard each Friday during Lent and every evening during Holy Week, April 1 - 7. Friday, March 16, 6:00 p.m., a Stations of the Cross geared for families with children will be provided.

Lenten Carbon Fast

Our new "green," LEED-certified Youth Center/ Gymnasium reflects St. Mark's commitment towards being better stewards of God's creation. We invite you to join with us this Lent in strengthening our environmental stewardship commitment by participating in a Lenten Carbon Fast.

Last year, over 6,000 people the world over welcomed a day-by-day opportunity to fast from carbon as their Lenten discipline. Initiated by the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ (UCC) and endorsed by Episcopalians, people of every Christian perspective – and people who were not Christians – benefitted from this opportunity to become more conscious and conscientious in their daily lives.

Sign up for the 2012 Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast by linking to:

<http://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/d.jsp?llr=cv76p6iab&p=oi&m=1109091349154>.

Those who sign up will receive daily email suggestions for activities that reduce our carbon footprints, Ash Wednesday, February 22 through Easter Sunday, April 8. Additionally, beginning on Ash Wednesday, each day's activity will be posted on a public facebook page at www.facebook.com/carbonfast. When possible, this will include a quantitative measure of the carbon reduction resulting from the activity. Each daily email will also have a section suggesting a weekly focus for the congregation. The activities range from the very simple: eliminate "vampire" electrical use; to the moderately challenging: take "military showers;" reduce your driving speed; to more long term: buy local produce and consider getting involved in a community garden.

We don't expect everyone to be able to do everything suggested; but, prayerful consideration of each day's activity can raise our awareness, inviting us to think more carefully about how our day to day living impacts the environment and make the changes we can. In addition to the activity for the day you will find information about the carbon impact of the activity, along with links to more information related to that activity. While we consider all of the activities a form of spiritual practice, a concrete way of participating in the stewardship of God's creation, some of the activities are overtly spiritual in the more usual sense that people understand: meditation, prayer, and self-reflection. The goal is for us to feel better for participating in this Lenten carbon fast while challenging ourselves to do more for God's creation.

God is calling us to be the change we long to see. Let us engage in this spiritual discipline, grateful for all God has entrusted to us, and trusting that with God all things are possible.



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