

LITTLE TRINITY

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Lent 2024

Spiritual Disciplines for Lent

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR LENT

This resource is designed to help you enter into the traditional spiritual disciplines of Lent, as a way of opening our hearts for the Holy Spirit to make Jesus known in the events of Holy Week and Easter. As we lean into these practices, we find ourselves more open to the still, small voice of the Spirit bringing his truth and light into our daily lives.

Ash Wednesday and the First Four Days of Lent
(February 14 – 17, 2024)

Self reflection & confession



**Almighty and everlasting God,
you despise 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 brokenness,
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.**

The practice of self-examination and confession is one that is particularly encouraged during Lent, as we seek to use the forty days to prepare our hearts for the intensity and joy of Holy Week and Easter. Self-examination and confession go hand-in-hand with prayer and fasting – as we come to God in prayer, he reveals ways in which we have not loved him with our whole heart, or our neighbours as ourselves. Sometimes, that repentance requires a concrete action to make it right.

FOR REFLECTION AS LENT BEGINS:

- Rest in God’s presence. Feel his love for you, and then ask the Lord to bring any unconfessed sins to mind. If nothing comes to mind, don’t worry. Whatever comes to mind, offer up to God.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to stir up and release any sorrow related to the sins you have committed. Ask his wisdom in seeing whether there is any action needed to make things right or to set helps in place to avoid that sin in the future.
- Receive, hold, and give thanks for the perfect forgiveness offered to you through Jesus.

FOR ACTION THIS WEEK:

- If the Holy Spirit has brought to mind any actions that need to be taken, such as asking forgiveness from someone or changing a practice or habit, try that this week. If you need help, reach out to a pastor or friend. Pastors are also available to hear confession.

The Week of the First Sunday in Lent
(February 18 – 24, 2024)

Fasting



Sunday reading: Luke 5:27-39

**Almighty God,
whose Son fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are but did not sin,
give us grace to discipline ourselves
in submission to your Spirit,
that as you know our weakness,
so we may know your power to save;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

The practice of fasting is one of the less-practiced spiritual disciplines, and yet it can yield incredible spiritual fruit. As we give up something to which we are accustomed, we are forced to rely on God in a new way. Fasting also provides a spiritual clarity and hunger that can be very beneficial in times of hardship or when particular discernment is needed.

FOR REFLECTION THIS WEEK:

- Fasting can look different for everyone; Isaiah 58:7 says that sharing your bread with the hungry is a type of fast that is particularly pleasing to God. A common thing to give up is alcohol or chocolate or meat, but other practices such as giving up TV watching or even grumbling may be right for you. From what may the Lord be calling you to fast this Lent?
- What are some of the things that you would find too difficult to give up? Take those to God in prayer, and hear his loving-kindness over you.

FOR ACTION THIS WEEK:

- Choose one thing that you will give up this Lent. This could be giving up something for the whole 40 days (Sundays are not included), or choosing to miss one meal per week, or some other option. As appropriate, let the people close to you know what you are giving up, so that you have support in it.
- If you are giving up something that costs money, consider donating the money saved towards a food bank or other means of 'offering your bread to the hungry'. If you are giving up something that takes time, consider using that time in service to those in need instead.
- If you are participating in the "diakoneo provisions" pilot project, (see the Justice page at www.littletrinity.org) try to use it as an opportunity to connect personally with the person receiving the meal.

The Week of the Second Sunday in Lent
(February 25 – March 2, 2024)

Bible Reading & Worship



Sunday reading: Luke 6:1-11

**Blessed Lord,
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our
learning:
help us so to hear them,
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,
we may embrace and for ever hold fast
the hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever.
Amen.**

Scripture reading and worship are obvious ways that the Holy Spirit uses to speak to us and to open us to the presence of God, but they require discipline as well. The Bible in a Year plan offered by the wardens is an excellent way to have company in this discipline. If that doesn't feel possible for you for any number of reasons, any Scripture reading is better than none! The Scriptures are full of gold for those who search for it.

FOR REFLECTION THIS WEEK:

- Is there anything that prevents you from reading the Bible on a regular basis?
- What steps can you take to overcome that obstacle?
- What parts of the Bible do you find encouraging? What parts don't you like? Use that as a conversation starter with God.

FOR ACTION THIS WEEK:

- If you're not already doing so, set aside a time to meditate on Scripture this week. This could be even five minutes of reading and enjoying a Psalm. If anything strikes you, share it with a friend or loved one.

The Week of the Third Sunday in Lent
(March 3 – 9, 2024)

Prayer



Sunday reading: Luke 7:1-17

**Let your merciful ears, O Lord,
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;
and that we may obtain our petitions
make us to ask such things as shall please you;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

No one ever said “I’m entirely satisfied with my prayer life” – instead, people often feel guilty for feeling like they don’t pray enough or in the right way. Rather than dwelling in any feelings of inadequacy around prayer this Lent, think about any times that you have found drawing closer to God enjoyable. Was it in nature? In a church service? In the company of friends? In listening to music? Allow yourself to accept that God created you in a unique way and seeks to communicate to you uniquely as well.

FOR REFLECTION THIS WEEK:

- What are some ways that prayer feels like a gift? What are some ways it doesn’t?
- Are there times in your life when prayer has felt easier or harder? Why was that?
- Are there unique ways that you feel God speaks to you? What are they?

FOR ACTION THIS WEEK:

- There are many ways to come to God in prayer. If you are in a season where prayer feels like a struggle, try something different: writing in a prayer journal, or using set prayers, or even just lighting a candle and allowing the Holy Spirit to be present in that space, loving you and encouraging you.

The Week of the Fourth Sunday in Lent
(March 10 – 16, 2024)

Giving



Sunday reading: Luke 7:18-35

**O God, our heavenly Father, who so loved the world
that you gave your only Son to die upon the cross:
Pour your love into our hearts, we humbly beseech you;
that we loving you above all things,
may give up ourselves, our time, our money,
our talents, to your service;
for the sake of him who loved us and gave himself for us,
Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.**

Generosity and gratitude are integrally linked - it is in practicing the art of gratitude that we are able to loosen our hold upon 'things' and enter into generosity. Gratitude acknowledges that all that we have comes from God and is gift to us. It opens our clenched fists and allows us to trust that a good God who has given everything for us will provide everything we need in him, freeing us to freely give.

FOR REFLECTION THIS WEEK:

- What are some areas of life where you feel frustrated or like you don't have enough? Spend some time thinking about what there may be to give thanks for in those areas as well. Take both the frustration and the gratitude to God in prayer.

FOR ACTION THIS WEEK:

- Think of three areas where you feel like you have been given much. How can you share that abundance with others? (E.g. if you're thankful for your family, can you invite someone who is alone over to spend time with you all? If you have extra clothes in the closet or food in the cupboard, can you donate some of it?) Make a concerted effort this week to notice what God has given you, and to share it with others.
- The youth will be collecting non-perishable food items, new toiletries, new or gently used clothing and financial donations. They will distribute the donations as they serve in the community this week, and they will use any financial donations to purchase requested items for local shelters and organizations. TO DONATE: bring items to the Parish Hall on Sunday, March 10th or make financial donations to: giving@littletrinity.org (with note 'for youth march break').

The Week of the Fifth Sunday in Lent
(March 17 – 23, 2024)

Service



Sunday reading: Luke 7:36-50

**Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son
came not to be served but to serve:
Bless all who, following in his steps,
give themselves to the service of others;
that with wisdom, patience, and courage,
they may minister in his Name
to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy;
for the love of him who laid down his life for us,
your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

God equips each of us with gifts that are unique to us, which reflect his glory in a particular way. Frederick Buechner once wrote that “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” There is a deep joy in using our particular gifts and skills in a way that benefits those around us, especially the “suffering, the friendless, and the needy” as the above prayer says.

FOR REFLECTION THIS WEEK:

- Have you had an experience of serving others that has brought deep gladness? What about it was so joyful for you?
- If you haven’t had this experience, spend some time thinking about what you like to do best. Are there creative ways that you can share that experience in service to others?

FOR ACTION THIS WEEK:

- What is a small or large act of loving service that you can offer someone this week? It could be as diverse as making a meal for someone going through a hard time, or volunteering at a food bank. If you already practice type of service, does it bring you joy? If not, maybe consider trying something different.



GET IN TOUCH

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