



## *From Ashes to Alleluia's*

Originating in the fourth century of the church, the season of Lent spans 40 weekdays beginning on Ash Wednesday and climaxing during Holy Week with Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday), Good Friday, and concluding the Saturday before Easter. Lent has traditionally been marked by penitential prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is a time of prayer and preparation to celebrate Easter.

The Scripture readings for the Sundays in Lent are provided to aid you in your preparation for worship each week.

### **1st Sunday in Lent**

Old Testament Reading: Deut 26:2-11  
Reading from the Psalms: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16  
New Testament Readings: Romans 10:8b-13, Luke 4:1-13

As Lent begins, consider the things that come between you and God. Confession causes us to face our nature, and can be a frightful thing, but it is also a bridge to God. Sincere confession is always followed by God's drawing near in forgiveness.

### **2nd Sunday In Lent**

Old Testament Reading: Gen. 15:1-12, 17-18  
Reading from the Psalms: Psalm 27  
New Testament Reading: Luke 13:31-35

Focusing on God can be a huge struggle: each day we are surrounded by things that compete for our affections. When we say "no" to the distractions of the world and choose not to indulge our overactive appetites for food, media images, or some other things, we may feel surprisingly weak; even nervous. Our anxiety level jumps at the thought of being empty of some familiar thing. When we empty ourselves for his sake, he can fill us in ways nothing else can. When we are weak, he is able to make us strong.

### **Third Sunday in Lent**

Old Testament Reading: Isa. 55:1-9  
Reading from the Psalms: Psalm 63:1-8  
New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Luke 13:1-9

Prayer: Father, through my observance of Lent, help me understand the meaning of Your son's death and resurrection, and teach me to reflect it in my life. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



#### **Fourth Sunday in Lent**

Old Testament Reading: Josh. 5:9-12  
 Reading from the Psalms: Psalm 32  
 New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Lent is a season well suited to practicing humility. Scripture tells us that Jesus humbled himself and was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (a more humiliating event could not have been imagined). We practice humility as a way to follow Jesus, and to cast off all our ineffective, prideful attempts at self-promotion, self-salvation, and self-satisfaction. We remember that Jesus' death is our only hope.

#### **5th Sunday in Lent**

Old Testament Reading: Isa. 43:16-21  
 Reading from the Psalms: Psalm 126  
 New Testament Reading: John 12:1-8

Next Sunday is Palm Sunday, which marks the day Jesus entered Jerusalem, and the beginning of Holy (Passion) Week. The word passion comes from a Latin word which means "suffering."

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your passionate love for me, that you would die for me. And thank you for your passionate love for the Father, that you would obey him, even to death. Have mercy on me. Pour your blessings over me. Enable me to love you passionately. Amen.

#### **6th Sunday in Lent (Palm Sunday)**

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9  
 Reading from the Psalms: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Psalm 31:9-16  
 New Testament Readings: Luke 19:28-30, Luke 23:1-49

Palm Sunday is the epitome of Lent; a day of great celebration, and a day of deep mourning. On this day, Jesus entered Jerusalem as its king while thousands rejoiced. Within a week, he would be dead, and his followers would be confused and scattered. For everyone who witnessed the events of that week 2000 years ago, it was a roller coaster ride, they knew little of Easter. We, on the other hand, have the hope of the resurrection, but also the knowledge that we are the reason for the crucifixion. Bright sadness....

#### **Easter, Resurrection of the Lord**

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 65:17-25, Isaiah 25:6-9  
 Reading from the Psalms: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, Psalm 114  
 New Testament Readings: Acts 10:34-43, 1 Cor. 15:19-26, John 20:1-18, 1 Cor. 5:6b-8  
 Luke 24:13-49

Lent began with a symbol of ashes, and ends with a flame of light; a sunrise that scatters the darkness of death. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Prayer: May the light of Jesus shine continually to drive away all darkness. May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find his light ever burning in our hearts — he who gives his light to all creation, and who lives and reigns for every and ever. Amen.