



Practicing
Lent

INTRODUCTION

The name "Lent" comes from an old English word for "lengthening," referring to the gradually longer days of springtime.

From Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, what was cold becomes warm. What was dormant awakens. Just as green shoots break through the winter earth, so the church stirs into action to proclaim the Easter mystery: in dying, God destroys death, and in rising, God delivers and proclaims newness of life.



What follows are 40 daily Lenten practices beginning with Ash Wednesday and concluding Easter Sunday. Each day you'll discover a suggested practice to explore, plus each Sunday outlines a simple time of prayer including a Lenten



confession, words from scripture, a bite-sized meditation, and a little blessing. Practice them alone, or with a partner, friends, or family, sharing experiences and insights as you travel.

ASH WEDNESDAY



CONFESS: God of love, you are God, and we are not. While you mend, too often we tear apart with injustice. While you are the very breath of spring, we are dust, and to dust we shall return. Mend us, heal us, bless us, and make us live again in you. Amen.

READ: Isaiah 58:5-8

MEDITATE: Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as we begin our Lenten journey from ashes to crocuses. In Jesus' name, Amen.

3.3 THURSDAY

PRACTICE

5 THINGS TO GIVE UP THIS LENT:

- Complaining
- Consuming
- Worrying
- Negative self talk
- Comparing yourself to others



3.4 FRIDAY

PRACTICE

5 THINGS TO TAKE UP THIS LENT:

- Breathing Deeply
- Acts of Kindness
- Time with Friends
- Healthy Choices
- Words of Affirmation (for yourself and others)



3.5 SATURDAY

I HOPE... MANIFESTO

Write a short "I hope ..." manifesto for Lent and share it on Facebook

"I hope I can learn to trust God more fully."

"I hope I can let go of fear."

"I hope I can learn to forgive more quickly when I am hurt."

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

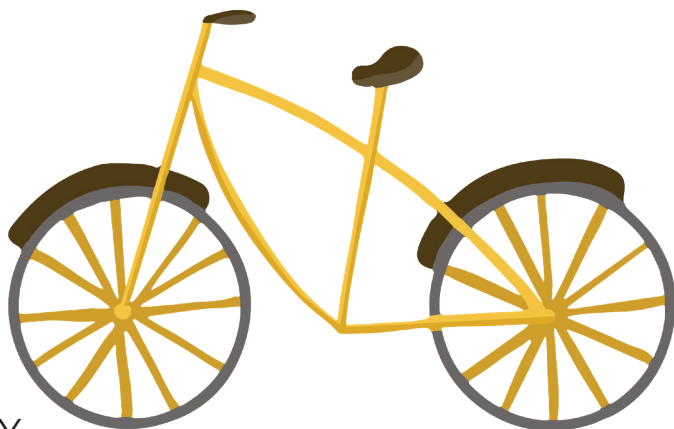


CONFESS: Loving God, heal our hearts, transform our relationships, and transfigure our lives so that we too might dazzle and love and dream and live more like Jesus. Amen.

READ: Mark 9:2-9

MEDITATE: And Jesus was transfigured before them, his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you follow Jesus' bright and brilliant ways of truth and life. Amen.



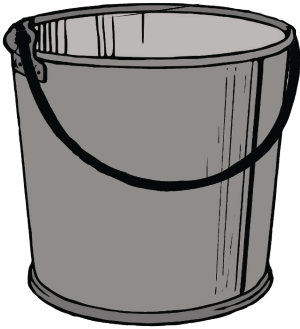
3.7 MONDAY PRACTICE

You can transfigure the world! This week, choose one way (or more!) to help the earth by recycling, composting, turning off lights, eating vegetarian or vegan, biking or walking instead of driving, or unplugging for a day.

3.8 TUESDAY

PRACTICE

What's on your bucket list?



List 10 things you've always wanted to do, but never have.

Choose 1 thing from your list and make a plan to do it (during Lent if you can.)



3.9 WEDNESDAY

PRACTICE

“DIG DEEPER” TEA CEREMONY QUESTIONS:

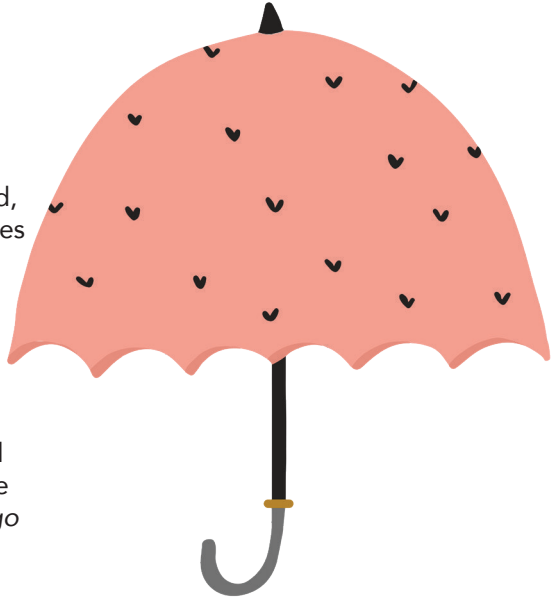
Make a cup of tea or coffee, and consider these questions:

- What is something you have always wanted to do, but haven't?
- When have you had to be brave or courageous? What happened? What did you do?
- What do you like or think is special about your family (origin or chosen)? Name at least three things!

3.10 THURSDAY

PRACTICE

When Jesus was transfigured, the scripture says, "his clothes became dazzling white," or "as white as lightning." Research and find five cool lightning facts. Here's one: until the late 18th century, people believed that ringing church bells repelled lightning, so many bells bore the inscription, *fulgura frango* ("I chase lightning").



3.11 FRIDAY

PRACTICE

Make your yard (or a nearby abandoned lot) more beautiful by planting a few packages of hearty seeds that will bloom this summer. Try cosmos, zinnias, forget-me-nots – or whatever your favorites are! After you plant your seeds, raise your hands in blessing and pray, "Loving God, please make the earth laugh with even more flowers. Amen."



3.12 SATURDAY

PRACTICE

This week, go climb a mountain, or a hill, or simply go for a walk with a beloved! As you go, play a walking game together. For example, tell a story by having one person begin with one sentence, followed by the next person with another sentence. Build your story together, one sentence at a time!

3.13 SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT



CONFESS: God of new life, here's the truth: too often, we're angry when we shouldn't be, and not angry enough when we should be. Give us your passion and gentleness – and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

READ: John 2:13-22

MEDITATE: After Jesus was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered what he had said; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you see and name both the injustices and blessings of this broken, beautiful world. Amen.

3.14 MONDAY

PRACTICE

This week have an “emotional check-in time” where you give a “weather report” on how you’re feeling. For example: “I’m dark and cloudy with a chance of rain.” Or: “The rain has finished, and I’m feeling sunny – with a rainbow arc across the sky.” Bless each and every “weather report” throughout the week.



3.15 TUESDAY

PRACTICE

Do you ever look around the world and feel angry? Anger is an important emotion, and can often call our attention to injustice. Do you ever look around the world and feel blessed? What is an injustice that stirs your passion? What keeps you from responding with a blessing?



3.16 WEDNESDAY

PRACTICE

“DIG DEEPER” TEA CEREMONY QUESTIONS:

Make a cup of tea or coffee, and consider these questions:

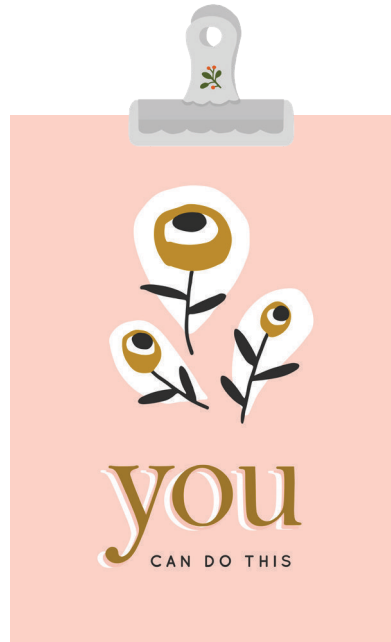
- If you could change one thing in the world, what would you change?
- What’s the biggest way you’ve changed over the years?
- The disciples remembered and believed in Jesus’ teachings all the more after his death and resurrection. Have you ever lost someone you loved? If so, what’s one thing you remember them telling you before they died?

3.17 THURSDAY

PRACTICE

THINGS TO REMEMBER THIS LENT:

- It’s okay to make mistakes
- It’s okay to have bad days
- It’s okay start again
- It’s okay to be awesome



WEEK 3.18 FRIDAY PRACTICE

Read the entirety of Rev. Martin Luther King, JR's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

Pray for the courage to move forward in the work of justice.



3.19 SATURDAY PRACTICE

One of our partners in ministry is Lovelady Center. Take a moment to research the work they do. (www.loveladycenter.org) Read their history and mission. Choose a way to help this ministry. You could donate items to Lovelady Thrift Stores (they sell these items and use the profits for ministry), or choose something from their Amazon Wish List.

3.20 THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



CONFESS: Forgiver of our souls, our hearts are hard; soften them. Our hands are fists; open them, and continue to breathe into us your spring-smelling newness of life. Amen.

READ: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

MEDITATE: O give thanks to God, for God is good; God's steadfast love endures forever.

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you learn to serve your neighbor with God's steadfast love. Amen.

3.21 MONDAY PRACTICE

Think of someone who has been a gift in your life.

Write a note, mail a letter, or send a text just to say:

"THANK YOU!"





3.22 TUESDAY PRACTICE

The sign for “I love you” in American Sign Language is the pinky finger, index finger, and thumb pointed straight out (with the middle two fingers held down to the palm). Post a picture of you by yourself or with some beloved making this sign, so that everyone in your community feels the love!



3.23 WEDNESDAY PRACTICE

“DIG DEEPER” TEA CEREMONY QUESTIONS:

Make a cup of tea or coffee, and consider these questions:

- The passage this week from the Psalms recommends singing “songs of joy.” What songs make you feel joyful?
- How do you show someone you love them?
- What makes you feel loved? (Be specific!)

3.24 THURSDAY

PRACTICE

THINGS TO REMEMBER THIS LENT:

- You are valuable.
- You are enough.
- Your mistakes do not define you.
- You are loved.



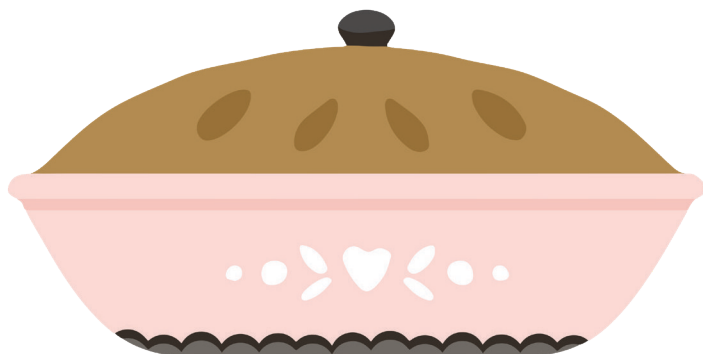
BLESS THIS MESS

3.25 FRIDAY

PRACTICE

PICK ONE (OR TWO!):

- Pick up trash in the neighborhood.
- Put out bird seed for the birds.
- Give outgrown clothing to a smaller friend.
- Write or draw something hopeful in chalk on a sidewalk near your church or home.



3.26 SATURDAY

PRACTICE

From the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, food is at the center of community in many cultures – and therefore a great way to introduce customs and traditions different from your own.

This week, try one new dish from a different culture, and open your heart and palate to the beauty of God’s diversity.

3.27 FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



CONFESS: Dear God, here we are: beloved, flawed, beautiful, failing, and trying again to be your people in the world. Forgive the wrongs we have done, and the good we have left undone. Amen

READ: Mark 1:9-15

MEDITATE: Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Child, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you become who you truly are: God’s beloved child, in whom God is well pleased. Amen.



3.28 MONDAY

PRACTICE

Place a little bowl of water by the front or back door this week, and every time you enter and exit, dip your finger in the water and sprinkle some on your face, or draw a little heart on your forehead. Remember that you are blessed: "You are God's beloved!"



3.29 TUESDAY

PRACTICE

Read John 13:1-15

How is Jesus, in this story, a blueprint for your living?



3.30 WEDNESDAY PRACTICE

"DIG DEEPER" TEA CEREMONY QUESTIONS:

Make a cup of tea or coffee, and consider these questions:

- Have you ever been baptized? Do you remember it? What details do you (or your family) remember? And in any case, what does baptism mean to you?
- What makes you feel loved? What makes you feel safe? What makes you feel happy?
- Name three things about yourself that you're proud of.



3.31 THURSDAY PRACTICE

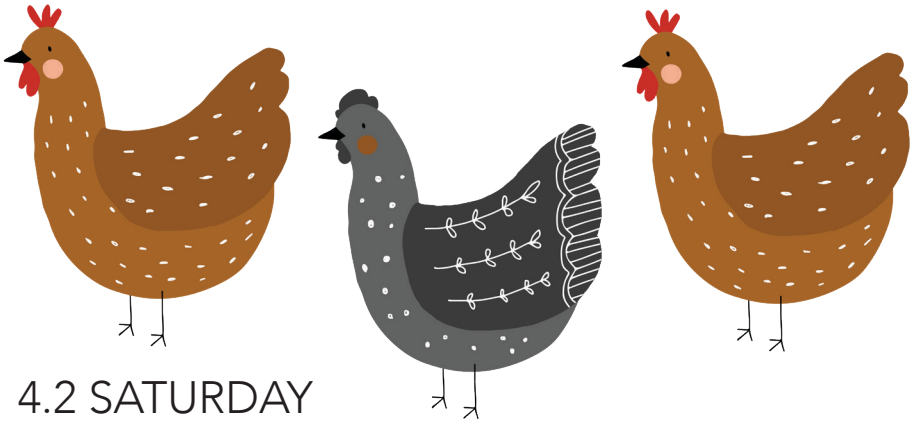
"When you wash your face, remember your baptism."
-Martin Luther

This is good advice – and it also extends to washing the dishes, cleaning the toilet, and doing laundry. Pick a chore this week that involves water, and do it, remembering your (and Jesus') baptism as you do.

YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL

4.1 FRIDAY PRACTICE

Write "You Are Beautiful" on a steamy bathroom mirror and watch it reappear for days (God loves writing with invisible ink!).



4.2 SATURDAY PRACTICE

When Jesus was baptized, scripture says that the Holy Spirit descended "like a dove," but the Greek word can also mean "pigeon." Take a walk this week and see if you can find any pigeons, doves, or any other birds. Reread Mark 1:9-15, and substitute whatever birds you saw on your walk ("like a sparrow," or "like a chickadee," or "like a blue jay"!).

4.3 FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



CONFESS: Gracious God, have mercy on us when we follow paths that do not lead to life. Forgive us when we choose the way of bitterness, indifference, violence, or death. Have mercy on our troubled souls, and turn them around for the sake of Your creation. Amen.

READ: John 12:20-33

MEDITATE: Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say, "God, save me from this hour?" No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour!

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you seek out and find what God is calling you to in this hour. Amen.

4.4 MONDAY

PRACTICE

Though our souls are deeply troubled by injustice, this week we're going to embrace what Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. called the "fierce urgency of now," declaring with Jesus that "for this reason we have come to this hour!"

Mother Theresa often said, "I used to believe that prayer changes things. Now I know that prayer changes us and we change things." How will you pray for God to change you today?



SHOP LOCAL

4.5 TUESDAY

PRACTICE

Shop local and know that you're bringing life to the area where you live. Eat a meal at a local restaurant, purchase a gift for someone (or treat yourself), support a local artist or craftsman, visit a farmer's market... community is important!

4.6 WEDNESDAY

PRACTICE

"DIG DEEPER" TEA CEREMONY

QUESTIONS:

Make a cup of tea or coffee, and consider these questions:

- What's your earliest memory of becoming aware of racism?
- Talk about a time when you or someone else said or did something racist. Did you interrupt it? Did you speak up? Why or why not?
- Is there anything you haven't done yet, no matter how large or small, that you are willing to do to help end racism? If so, what is it? And what plan can you make to start?





4.7 THURSDAY PRACTICE

Disciples Home Missions (DHM) is a hands-on General Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). DHM lives into the Gospel of Jesus Christ by strengthening and developing partnerships, supporting congregational transformation, resourcing leadership development, sustaining faith formation, providing mission opportunities and advocating for justice, fairness, and equality for all of God's children and creation.

Take some time today to explore this work you support by going to <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org>. Click on the Missions & Advocacy Tab and choose a ministry (or two) to explore and learn about.



4.8 FRIDAY PRACTICE

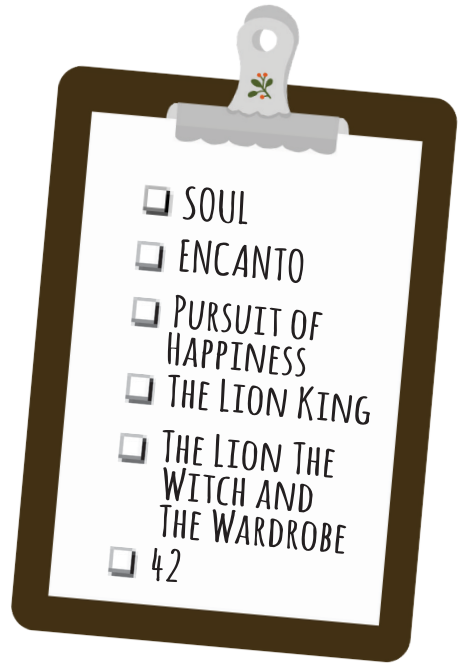
Pay attention to all of the *new life* you see today. Take a picture of something that reminds you of resurrection. It can be anything that represents new life to you. Post a picture on social media with a word or two about how you see new life springing forth.

4.9 SATURDAY

PRACTICE

Watch a movie that reminds you of reconciliation, resurrection, and second chances.

Here are some possibilities. If you have a different one we'd love to hear about it!



4.10 PALM SUNDAY

CONFESS: Dear God, you hear us shout and sing, “Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!” And yet, all too soon, we turn away and are silent in the face of hurt, violence, and injustice all around. Forgive us and restore to us courage and kindness. Amen.

READ: John 12:12-16

MEDITATE: Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written, “Do not be afraid, sons and daughters of Zion. Look, your Savior is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you shout and sing “Hosanna!,” calling a whole new world into being. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

4.11 MONDAY

PRACTICE

Read Matthew 6:25-34

Play the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy," and sing and dance with abandon knowing that God cares for you and all of your needs.



4.12 TUESDAY

PRACTICE

Buy or make a little bouquet of flowers, or bring inside some forsythia branches from outside. Let the blooms give you hope that resurrection is at loose in the world! Or go with two bouquets – and give one to a neighbor.

4.13 WEDNESDAY

PRACTICE

“DIG DEEPER” TEA CEREMONY

QUESTIONS:

Make a cup of tea or coffee, and consider these questions:

- What’s been the best part of your Lenten journey so far?
- Have you noticed anything in the Jesus stories that reminds you of today?
- We’re about to go into the valley of the shadow of death with Jesus, and then rise again on Easter morning. What’s your biggest fear these days? And what do you think is on the other side of that fear, if you were to move through it?



4.14 THURSDAY

THE EASTER TRIDUUM

Sundown on Holy Thursday to sundown on Easter Sunday are the three most mysterious and heart-breakingly beautiful days of the Christian calendar. The word “triduum” (pronounced “TRID-yoo-um”) comes from two Latin words meaning “three” and “days.”

HERE ARE A FEW WAYS TO MARK THESE THREE DAYS AT HOME:

- Fast from all digital devices and social media
- Eat dinner in the dark on Good Friday
- Buy nothing for three days
- Make hot crossed buns
- Make holy water in your house by blessing it first and then drawing a cross on everyone’s forehead, saying with a smile, “You are beloved!”



4.15 GOOD FRIDAY



CONFESS: God of life and death, forgive what we have done and what we have left undone. Forgive the suffering we have caused and the suffering we have neglected to see, the resurrections we have overlooked and the resurrections we have neglected to be. In Jesus' name, Amen.

READ: Psalm 22

MEDITATE: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you as you sit in the shadow of death. May resurrection be your hope, today and everyday. In Jesus' name, Amen.

4.16 HOLY SATURDAY



CONFESS: Holy One, we sit in the darkness of this liminal space, in between death and life, waiting. Waiting for the truth of resurrection to be born in us. Forgive and restore us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

READ: Luke 44-56

MEDITATE: Then Jesus said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. Having said this, he breathed his last.

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you as you sit in the shadow of death. May resurrection be your hope, today and everyday. In Jesus' name, Amen.



4.17 EASTER SUNDAY

SING: This Little Light of Mine

READ: Mark 16:1-8

MEDITATE: But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here!"

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you become God's Easter people who know victory over death and joy over despair – for God has raised Jesus from the dead! Alleluia, Amen!

*I am the
resurrection
and the life.*

JOHN 11:25

