

THE MEANING OF “LENT”

Lent is a season of the church year that precedes Holy Week and Easter. It begins on “Ash Wednesday” (February 18, 2026) and ends on Palm Sunday (which is the beginning of Holy Week, March 29, 2026). It is 40 days long.

Ash Wednesday – We hold a service on Ash Wednesday (Wednesday, February 18, 7:30pm). The centre of the service is when each person comes forward to the front of the church and is marked on their foreheads with the sign of the cross using ashes. Ashes represent grief and sadness when something terrible happens and when someone dies. Ancient people would pour ashes on their heads and faces to express their sorrow. Why sorrow? Because there is trouble in our world and in our lives. We stand before God in repentance, seeking to become purified before God, forgiven and renewed.

40 days of Lent – The people of Israel were in the wilderness 40 years before they entered the promised land. Jesus was in the wilderness 40 days before his public ministry as the Christ. 40 represents a time of testing and struggle, seeking to hear God’s voice and direction. Lent is a time to get close to God, to become purified, to find the faith and courage to renew yourself before God, face truth, make a commitment or say no to a bad habit or relationship. It is a time to become honest before God seeking forgiveness and also repenting of behaviour that is harmful to another person or yourself. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday.

Fasting – Some people fast during Lent. You can fast by not eating food or certain kinds of food like meat or sweet things. You can refrain from alcohol or coffee. Or, other people turn fasting from not doing something to doing something positive like donating time as a volunteer or money for a worthy purpose like caring for the poor. Fasting is like charity for your neighbour, a family member or volunteer service.

How will you mark Lent this year? Will you join us on Wednesday, Feb. 18, 7:30pm at the church for our Ash Wednesday Service? Will you fast in some way? Will you pray and seek God's guidance, strength and direction? Is there something you need to repent of something you need to forgive, someone you need to love better or give more of your time or attention to? God doesn't rescue from above. God come to be beside you and move through you as Holy Spirit, giving you strength to walk the journey and overcome. Following Jesus through the cross with the promise of resurrection is what the season of Lent leading to Easter is all about.

Dr. Harris