



Lenten Reading Guide 2018
Covenant Presbyterian Church of Chicago

linoprint: The Flowering Cross, by Leilani Pearson

The Meaning of Lent

The Season of Lent originated in the early centuries of church history as a time of preparation for Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts until Holy Saturday, the Saturday before Easter. The last week of Lent is called Holy Week, which includes both Maundy Thursday (commemorating the institution of the Lord's Supper) and Good Friday (commemorating the crucifixion of our Jesus).

Reminiscent of Israel's forty years in the wilderness and Jesus' forty days of fasting in the wilderness, the Lenten season, not counting Sundays, lasts forty days. Sundays are not included because the Lord's Day, according to church tradition, is never a fast day but always a *feast* day, a celebration of the resurrection.

Lent is traditionally observed by penitence, sacrificial giving, self-denial, and prayer. We come before God in humility, confessing our sin and total inadequacy, stripping ourselves bare of all pretense. We place our needs, fears, failures, hopes and lives into the hands of God. We confess that our only hope is in Christ, who lived, died, and rose on our behalf.

A Daily Lenten Prayer

While there is no single way to observe Lent, you may find the following format for daily prayer and Scripture readings a helpful guide. It can be followed with family, friends, small groups, or in solitude.

Opening: Consider who Christ is and who you are. The words of this simple, ancient prayer are a good starting place:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Confession: Meditate on the week's psalm of lament and confession. Respond to the psalm with your own prayer of lament and confession. You may want to use these prayers of confession as a guide.

“Most holy and merciful Father: I confess to you that I have sinned by my own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what I have done, and by what I have left undone.

I have not loved you with my whole heart, and mind, and strength. I have not loved my neighbors as myself. I have not forgiven others as I have been forgiven.

I have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served me. I have not been true to the mind of Christ. I have grieved your Holy Spirit.

I confess to you, Lord, all my unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of my life, My self-indulgent appetites and ways, and my exploitation of other people, My anger and frustration, and my envy of those more fortunate than me, My intemperate

love of worldly goods and comforts, and my dishonesty in daily life and work, My negligence in prayer and worship, and my failure to commend the faith that is in me,

Accept my repentance, Lord, for the wrongs I have done: for my blindness to human need and suffering, and my indifference to injustice and cruelty,

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward my neighbors, and for my prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from me,

For my waste and pollution of your creation, and my lack of concern for those who come after me.

Restore me, good Lord, and let your anger depart from me; Favorably hear me, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in me the work of your salvation, That I may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord, Bring me with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God, have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen me in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep me in eternal life. Amen.”

Meditation: Read and reflect on the day’s Scripture Lesson. These lessons are drawn from Genesis to Revelation and survey the history of God’s redemptive work in the world. Take time to reflect on how Christ invites us into God’s great redemptive plan.

Closing: Seek the presence of Christ in prayer. The following verses remind us who He is.

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1.29)

“Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.” (Isaiah 53.4)

“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15.22)

“Since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10.21-22)

Daily Scripture Readings

Day		Psalm of Lament	Scripture Lesson
Ash Wednesday	Feb 14	Psalm 123	Gen 1.1-2.3
Thursday	Feb 15		Gen 3.1-2.4
Friday	Feb 16		Gen 12.1-9
Saturday	Feb 17		Gen 15.1-6
First Sunday in Lent (February 18) Romans 5:1-11			
Monday	Feb 19	Psalm 142	Gen 22.1-19
Tuesday	Feb 20		Gen 50.15-21
Wednesday	Feb 21		Exod 3.1-12
Thursday	Feb 22		Exod 15.1-18
Friday	Feb 23		Exod 20.1-21
Saturday	Feb 24		Exod 40.34-38
Second Sunday in Lent (February 25) Romans 5:12-19			
Monday	Feb 26	Psalm 38	Deut 9.4-12
Tuesday	Feb 27		Deut 18.15-22
Wednesday	Feb 28		Josh 1.1-9
Thursday	Mar 1		Judg 2.16-23
Friday	Mar 2		1 Sam 16.1-8
Saturday	Mar 3		2 Sam 7.1-17
Third Sunday In Lent (March 4) Romans 6:1-11			
Monday	Mar 5	Psalm 90	2 Chr 6.12-21
Tuesday	Mar 6		2 Chr 36.15-23
Wednesday	Mar 7		Isa 1.1-11
Thursday	Mar 8		Isa 40.1-8
Friday	Mar 9		Isa 52.13 - 53.12
Saturday	Mar 10		Jer 31.31-40
Fourth Sunday in Lent (March 11) Romans 8:18-30			
Monday	Mar 12	Psalm 25	Joel 2.12-17
Tuesday	Mar 13		Mic 6.6-8
Wednesday	Mar 14		Matt 1.1-25
Thursday	Mar 15		Matt 3.1-17
Friday	Mar 16		Matt 4.1-11
Saturday	Mar 17		Matt 5.1-20
Fifth Sunday in Lent (March 18) Romans 8:31-38			
Monday	Mar 19	Psalm 51	Matt 16.13-28
Tuesday	Mar 20		2 Cor 12.1-10
Wednesday	Mar 21		Phil 3.1-11
Thursday	Mar 22		Col 1.15-23
Friday	Mar 23		Heb 10.1-18
Saturday	Mar 24		Rev 21.1-14
Sixth Sunday in Lent / Palm Sunday (March 25) Matthew 21.1-11			
Monday	Mar 26	Psalm 22	Matt 22:23-46
Tuesday	Mar 27		Matt 24:1-14
Wednesday	Mar 28		Matt 25:1-13
Maundy Thursday	Mar 29		Matt 26:14-29
Good Friday	Mar 30		Matt 27:32-56
Holy Saturday	Mar 31		Matt 27:62-66
Easter Sunday (April 1) Matthew 28:1-20			