

THE SEASON OF LENT

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

*Ash Wednesday Liturgy
The Book of Common Prayer*

Lent is a season that calls us to a serious renewal of our commitment to turn our lives over to the will of God, to do God's work in our lives moment by moment and day by day. It is a time of preparation for the coming of Easter through prayer, fasting and study. It is also a time of preparing for new growth.

The season of Lent begins on a different day each year, as its date is dependent on the time that Easter occurs. This year Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on Feb. 22nd and The First Sunday in Lent is Feb. 26th . Lent extends to March 31st followed by Holy Week.

Lent is a term derived from Anglo-Saxon and means "long days" or "spring"; a reference to the lengthening days of the Spring. It dates from the 4th century and was a time of special discipline for those who were to be baptized. In time, it became a spring period of fasting, self-denial and penitence for all in preparation for Easter.

The color of the season is purple, the royal color, to prepare for the King. There will be some differences in the way we do our Liturgy. The "Alleluias" will be omitted during the season of Lent.

Regardless of practice and custom, this season is an important one for Christians. We must keep Lent holy by fixing our thoughts on the things of our faith. The early church is said to have stressed penitence rather than fasting, but the modern church is now stressing the period of Lent as a time of personal introspection and growth; a time of preparation; a time of prayer, fasting, self-denial and study.

Lent, as a time of introspection, is a time to prepare to bloom for Easter. The most important aspect is spiritual development and focus. To that end you might want to take on something. Perhaps add some prayer time in your life, take on a special book for your Lenten reading, visiting a shut in or attending the weekly Lenten Series. It is a lovely quiet time. A gift from God. A time to just BE and to discover your spiritualness.

May this Lent be a time of discovery for you. The depth and height and beauty of God's ways are marvelous to behold.