
WHAT IS LENT?

Lent is the season of forty weekdays and six Sundays leading up to Easter. It is a period of preparation for Easter via self-examination and repentance hopefully ushering in a season of spiritual renewal. Lenten practices are a heightened response to God's salvation and our favor in God's eyes through Christ. Lent trains us to respond to grace via obedience and it should not be avoided for fear that it is legalistic. Rather, Lent should be observed as a season of amplified awareness of God's work on our behalf and the cultivation of our obedient response to that gracious work.

THREE PRACTICES TO TAKE UP DURING LENT

GRIEVE

Despite our best efforts to avoid it, the realities of decay and death permeate our lives. During the season of Lent, we are called into a season of grief by the words of Genesis 3:19 "From dust you came, and to dust you shall return." In this time, we make space to feel the weight of disappointment, loss, and despair. We do so, not so that these feelings undo us, but instead to create space for healing and hope. During this Lenten season, we invite you and your family to make space for intentional grieving, to give yourselves permission to lament the pains of life.

REPENT

In Jesus Christ, God is doing a new thing. As Jesus says in Mark 1:15 "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." To repent means to be convinced of another way—to change your mind, actions, or convictions, turning away from that which is the "old way of thinking" and working on inner change that gives rise to new ways of living. During Lent, we invite you to actively turn from your own, old, ways and turn your heart towards God, whose ways are good, loving, and create new life.

SET DOWN, TAKE UP

For the next six weeks, you are encouraged to set something down that keeps you focused on your own needs. Creatively explore ways your daily habits keep your mind self-focused and unattuned to God and choose something to set down or fast from during Lent. Then, in place of what you are putting down, take up prayer. If you need help praying daily, try reciting the attached prayer, adapted from *Every Moment Holy*, by Douglas Kaine McKelvey.

— PRAYING WITH AND FOR OUR MISSION PARTNERS —

Each Sunday in Lent, we hear from one of six local and global mission partners. They will give us a brief update on the work they are doing, how they are seeing the Gospel move, and also share a prayer request. We invite you to hear the request and keep each partner in your prayers during the following week.

Sunday, March 6

ARM of Care

ARM of Care's mission is to use the Creative Arts to restore and empower individuals who have been commercially sexually exploited through human trafficking or are at risk for being trafficked.

armofcare.org

Sunday, March 13

Project Peace

Project Peace pursues biblical justice by activating a network of churches to serve and sustain their local communities.

projectpeaceeastbay.org

Sunday, March 20

Hope Solutions

Hope Solutions heals the effects of poverty and homelessness by providing permanent housing solutions and vital support services to highly vulnerable families and individuals.

hopesolutions.org

Sunday, March 27

Intersivity Christian Fellowship

IVF's vision is to see students and faculty transformed, campuses renewed, and world changers developed.

intersivity.org

Sunday, April 3

Scientific Technology and Language Institute

The vision of STLI is to develop people to develop themselves, their families, communities and country.

stli.org

Sunday, April 10

Compassion International

Through various approaches, Compassion releases children from poverty in Jesus' name.

compassion.com

God as I hold a moment in my thoughts; I ask that you would hold _____ eternally in yours, remaining ever at work in their heart and life, even now directing their path. In Jesus' name, Amen.