

# Lent 2008

For those of you who are new to our fellowship and may not have much experience in observing it, Lent is the 40-day period before Easter that many Christians down through the centuries have used to prepare themselves for the church's yearly celebration in the spring of the suffering and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every Sunday is a celebration of Christ's death and resurrection, but from the early centuries onward the Christian church in the West has seen fit to mark these great events in a special way once a year on the first weekend after the first full moon in the Spring. This year, Lent began on Wednesday, February 6, Good Friday is on March 21, and Easter is on March 23.

Originally, Lent was a forty-day period of fasting, a time of sobriety and repentance (with the exception that there was no fasting on Sunday since each Sunday was a celebration of the Resurrection.) "Lenten-Tide" was the old Anglo Saxon term for spring, and as this pre-Easter fast was always in the spring, it came to be called "Lent". The period was set at 40 days in light of Jesus' own forty-day fast at the beginning of his public ministry (and Moses' and Elijah's forty-day fasts before that).

We live in a secular, a feel-good age. Some of that has changed since 9/11; people seem more willing now to admit that evil is real. Still, we don't like to "dwell on the negative." But Christians live differently: they know how to mourn and laugh as a daily way of life. We laugh because we know that Jesus Christ has conquered everything that threatens to ruin God's world; but we mourn because we take sin and the brokenness of life seriously. As one Christian writer put it:

*Only insofar as we comprehend sin can we comprehend Christ.*

And remember the stunning fact we've reflected on in our sermon series on Matthew: Jesus, who for modern people seems to be about only love and compassion, began his public preaching ministry with the rather sober and unsettling challenge, "**Repent! For the kingdom of heaven is near!**" Character really does count, and Jesus finds us all wanting.

Yet he came into the world not to judge the world but to save it, by suffering under God's just punishment for sin—our sin. *So Lent is about the love underneath Christ's pain.* But the pain was the measure of the love. So use this season to remind yourself again of the brutality of Jesus' crucifixion and the excruciating pain he endured even before he was nailed to the cross.

Use the gospel readings on the last page of this handout during Holy Week (Palm Sunday, March 16, through Easter, March 23), as they will enable you to walk with Jesus, as it were, through that last painful week of his life before his crucifixion. Just about a third of the text of the gospels is devoted to the events of the week before Jesus' death. There's a reason, as someone put it, that the biblical record slows down rather than speeds up when it gets to the events of Holy Week.

Let me encourage you to use the meditation by Oswald Chambers below to draw near to our Lord over the coming weeks. And do not be afraid to go down into the depths with Christ as you mourn the terrible remaining selfishness of your own heart, and the terrible sufferings and injustices in the world. How could we not feel sick at heart on hearing the news Thursday night that an angry citizen in Kirkwood stormed into a town council meeting, killing five people?

*(continue on next page)*

But remember, too, that the cross not only bespeaks pain but victory, because God and man were reconciled there, and all who trust that will outlive the anguish of the world. Remember that those willing to do the hard thing of mourning will be surprised by everlasting joy, according to the psalmist's promise:

**weeping may last for the night,  
but joy comes in the morning.**

[Psalm 30:5](#)

As we continue moving toward people, showing respect and truly caring about them and earning the right to speak of our great Savior, we should realize that the world aches to know how to reconcile life's sorrows with its joys; and we should remind each other that it's the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ that teaches us how to do just that.

—Ron Lutjens

## *Acquaintance with Grief*

**"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." —Isaiah 53:3**

*We are not acquainted with grief in the way in which Our Lord was acquainted with it; we endure it, we get through it, but we do not become intimate with it. At the beginning of life we do not reconcile ourselves to the fact of sin. We take a rational view of life and say that a man by controlling his instincts, and by educating himself, can produce a life which will slowly evolve into the life of God. But as we go on, we find the presence of something which we have not taken into consideration, namely, sin, and it upsets all our calculations. Sin has made the basis of things wild and not rational. We have to recognize that sin is a fact, not a defect; sin is red-handed mutiny against God. Either God or sin must die in my life. The New Testament brings us right down to this one issue. If sin rules in me, God's life in me will be killed; if God rules in me, sin in me will be killed. There is no possible outcome but that. The climax of sin is that it crucified Jesus Christ, and what was true in the history of God on earth will be true in your history and in mine. In our mental outlook we have to reconcile ourselves to the fact of sin as the only explanation as to why Jesus Christ came, and as the explanation of the grief and sorrow in life.*

—Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)

## *~ Lenten Liturgy ~*

This year, to focus our Lenten worship, we will be celebrating our Lord Jesus Christ using the great

"I Am" sayings of John's gospel—those things Jesus claimed he and he alone is for the world: Light, Bread, the Good Shepherd, the Way to God, the Truth, the Life.

<b>February</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1st Sunday in Lent:</b>	<b>Descent to the Cross: I Am the Light of the World</b>
<b>February</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2nd Sunday in Lent:</b>	<b>Descent to the Cross: I Am the Bread of Life</b>
<b>February</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3rd Sunday in Lent:</b>	<b>Descent to the Cross: I Am the Good Shepherd</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4th Sunday in Lent:</b>	<b>Descent to the Cross: I Am the Way, Truth, Life</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5th Sunday in Lent:</b>	<b>Descent to the Cross: Before Abraham Was, I Am</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6th Sunday in Lent:</b>	<b>Descent to the Cross: Palm Sunday: The Triumphal Entry</b>

**Friday, March 21:** Joint Good Friday Worship at Cornerstone Evangelical Free Church  
(Ron Lutjens preaching this year)

## ~ Lenten Calendar ~

We also have something this year for children: lovely Lenten calendars made in Germany with a little “door” to open each day leading up to Easter (with a Biblical scene inside the door). The scene on the calendar is a very nice, simple topographical map of the Holy Land. We have 20 of these available, and if you want one, please see Pastor Ron.



## ~ Easter Baskets for Kids ~

The Mercy Ministry team invite you to help put together Easter Baskets for children that will be distributed to families served by Webster-Rock Hill Ministries. We will be filling the baskets with useful and fun items for children ages 3 through 11. The church will supply baskets with instructions on Sunday, February 17 and we ask you to return the filled baskets on **Sunday, March 16**. The church will also include a child-oriented tract (or coloring book) presenting the gospel message in each basket. This year Phil Patterson will coordinate this project with Durinda Hood assisting, along with all of you who fill the baskets, and those who help with preparing them for delivery!

## ~ Good Friday ~ March 21

As is our custom, we will gather in homes on Good Friday at 5:45 p.m. for a simple meal. There are two types of meals, *sharing meals* and *reciting meals*. In a sharing meal there is open sharing with each other how Christ's finished work on the cross is having its effect on us, right where we live. In a reciting meal we read to each other the dramatic story (highlighted from Genesis to Revelation) of our rebellion and God's redemption. We encourage you to bring non-Christian friends to these meals. We also need hosts for these meals; especially those living within Webster or 10-15 minutes of Cornerstone. (*Call the church office by Wednesday, February 20 if you can host one of these meals.*) There will be a special meal for children (*divided ages: 1-4; 5-11 years*) at the church during these adult meals (arrival time at 5:30 p.m.). Look for sign-up sheets on Sunday, February 24.

This year, following the Good Friday meals, we will worship at Cornerstone Evangelical Free Church at **7:30 p.m.** with our brothers and sisters in Christ there. As we celebrate Christ's death together that night it will be a symbol of our need to stand unified as Christians in our testimony to the wider Webster Groves community.

## ~ Easter Morning ~ March 23

Part of our tradition is to decorate the sanctuary and parlor **with spring flowers**. We are looking for people to bring flowers that Sunday. If you can help, please call Barbara Winters, 314.725.1214.

Instead of having our regular Sunday School classes, we turn Easter morning into a festive celebration of Christ's victory over death for us.

Here's what is being planned:

- **Sunrise Service** 7:30 a.m. at Blackburn Park (led by our teenagers)
- **Hallelujah Buffet** available at Milligan House (organized by our Hospitality Ministry)
- **Easter Egg Hunt** for children beginning at 9:15 a.m. on the Milligan House lawn.
- **Folk Dancing** 9:40—10:00 a.m. on the lawn in front of Milligan House or in the parlor if it's too cold outside
- **Easter Service** in the Sanctuary 10:15 a.m. .
- **Balloon Launch.** The children (& maybe some adults!) will send off helium-filled balloons as a symbol of Christ's resurrection. Buffet leftovers also after the service.

We will let you know what YOU can do to help in the Sundays leading to Easter.

*Easter is our great feast day as  
Christians—  
so do come and celebrate Jesus with us that  
morning!*

Part of our tradition is to decorate the sanctuary and parlor **with spring flowers**. We are looking for people to bring flowers that Sunday. If you can help, please call Barbara Winters, 314.725.1214.

Here's what is being planned:

- ❖ **Sunrise Service** 7:30 a.m. at Blackburn Park (led by our teenagers)
- ❖ **Hallelujah Buffet** at Milligan House (organized by our Hospitality Ministry)
- ❖ **Easter Egg Hunt** for children beginning at 9:15 a.m. on the Milligan House lawn.
- ❖ **Folk Dancing** 9:40—10:00 a.m. on the lawn in front of Milligan House or in the parlor if it's too cold outside
- ❖ **Easter Service** in the Sanctuary 10:15 a.m.
- ❖ **Balloon Launch.** The children (& maybe some adults!) will send off helium-filled balloons as a symbol of Christ's resurrection. Buffet leftovers also after the service.

We will let you know what YOU can do to help in the Sundays leading to Easter.

*Join us to celebrate the Risen Christ on Easter*

*Sunday!*  
*~ Easter Sunday ~ March 23*  
*Join us to celebrate the Risen Christ on Easter Sunday!*

*See next page for more.*  
*~ Things To Do ~*

In summary, here are things to do:

**Easter Baskets for Kids.**

Pick up a basket for a child on Sunday, February 17 and fill it by Sunday, March 16.

**Host a Good Friday Meal.** Call the church office by February 20. (314.962.3795)

**Help out at the Children's Meal on Good Friday.** See Mark Tucker.

**Sign up to bring food** for the Hallelujah Breakfast on Easter Morning. Look for the sign-up sheets.

If you have questions or suggestions or willing to help in some way, call Kathy Jennings, 636.386.2394.

**Bring Spring Flowers Easter Sunday.** Let Barbara Winters know you plan to bring flowers.

**Bring a dozen decorated hard-boiled eggs on Easter Sunday.** Bring them by 8:45 a.m. Easter morning.

**Volunteer to serve in the nursery on Easter morning.** See sign-up sheet in next couple weeks.

*~ Closing ~*

Lent, as a time of preparation for Good Friday and Easter, is to be a time to find again the Center, the Center of all our work, our outreach, our ministry, our strivings, our confidences: Christ's experience of humiliation, pain, and death on our behalf, that we might be delivered from all the powers of the Evil One, and given instead a share in the splendor of God's kingdom.

Using the season of Lent for spiritual focus—reflecting on the depth of human wretchedness that Jesus the Son came to undo, and on his obedience to the Father in life and in death; tracing the action of the drama of redemption that leads up to the climax at the cross that Friday; examining our lives to see where we have not been, but should be, living out the Beatitudes, the character traits of the citizens of the Kingdom Jesus inaugurated—all this does not add up to a morbid preoccupation with our sin and brokenness for the next six weeks! Marking Lent may not be allowed to dampen our joy and confidence that Christ lives now at the Father's right hand, that

our place is there with him in the power of the Holy Spirit, and that he actually wants to use us, to draw us up as co-workers with him as he works to make his Kingdom come.

—*Ron Lutjens*



## ~ Lent: The Passion Story ~

The Passion Week	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
<b>Sunday</b>				
The Triumphal Entry	21:1-9	11:1-10	19:29-40	12:12-19
Jesus View of the City	21:10-11	11:11	19:41-44	
<b>Monday</b>				
Cursing of the Fig Tree	21:18-19	11:12-14		
Cleansing of the Temple	21:12-13	11:15-19	19:45-48	
Healings in the Temple	21:14-17			
<b>Tuesday</b>				
The Withered Fig Tree	21:19-22	11:20-25		
Controversy	21:23-22:46	11:27-12:37	20:1-44	
Condemnation of Scribes & Pharisees	23:1-39	12:38-40	20:45-47	
Jesus' Observation of Widow		12:41-44	21:1-4	
The Visit of the Greeks				12:20-36
Jewish Rejection of Jesus				12:37-50
The Apocalyptic Discourse	24 & 25	13:1-37	21:5-38	
Prediction of the Cross	26:1-5	14:1-2	22:1-2	
Anointing by Mary	26:6-13	14:3-9		12:2-8
The Betrayal	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6	
<b>Wednesday</b>				
No record				
<b>Thursday</b>				
The Passover Meal	26:17-29	14:12-25	22:7-30	13:1-38
Farewell Discourse				14:1-31
Discourse on Way to Gethsemane				15 & 16
The High Priestly Prayer				17
In the Garden	26:30, 36-46	14:26, 32-42	22:39-46	18:1
Betrayal and Arrest	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12
Trial Before Annas				18:12-
14, 19-23				
Trial Before Caiaphas	26:57, 59-68	14:53, 55-65	22:54, 63-65	18:24
The Denial of Peter	26:58, 69-75	14:54, 66-72	22:54-62	18:15-
18, 25-27				
Trial Before Sanhedrin	27:1	15:1	22:66-71	
Death of Judas	27:3-10			
<b>Friday</b>				
Trial Before Pilate	27:2, 11:14	15:1-5	23:1-5	18:28-38
Before Herod			23:6-12	
Return to Pilate	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	18:39-19:16
Mockery by Soldiers	27:27-30	15:16-19		
The Way to Calvary	27:31-34	15:20-23	23:26-32	19:16-17
The Crucifixion	27:35-36	15:24-41	23:33-49	19:18-30
The Burial	27:57-60	15:42-46	23:50-54	19:31-42
<b>Saturday</b>				
The Women at the Tomb	27:61	15:47	23:55-56	
The Guard	27:62-66			
<b>Sunday</b>				
<b>The Resurrection</b>	28	16	24	20