

Leroy Community Chapel

## The Season of Lent



It's coming ... in a week or so you'll start seeing the signs for the "Fish Fry's", TV news programs will feature shots of "Ash Wednesday" services, and you'll overhear people talking about what they've given up for Lent. Christians around the world take part in the beginning of Lent. But should we?

Historically Lent was a devotional period (for the 40 days preceding Easter) in which Christians repented from sin and focused on realigning themselves with God's will and ways. Unfortunately, modern adherence to this part of the Christian year often focuses more on the revelry of "Mardi Gras" than on the themes of repentance, preparation, and godliness. Many argue that the "mainline" denominations have forsaken the real meaning, the heart, and thus the Gospel in the season of Lent. All the more reason for those of us who love the Gospel, trust the Word, and find our roots in the historic Christian faith to embrace the seasons of the Church calendar that directs our hearts in worship.

The Reformers, mostly in protest against the Rome, tossed out the Holy Days of the Church, but we know now that was an unnecessary overreaction. Every day isn't the same ... we need change, and perspective. The Church Calendar provides that. It directs us to seasons of celebration and joy (Advent leading into Christmas), and seasons of reflections and repentance (Lent leading into Easter). This isn't a call to a special diet, or some sort of spiritual hocus-pocus that will transform you into a super-Christian. Rather, Lent is an opportunity, "a devotional camp," where we may wean ourselves away from pride, sin, and self-sufficiency to a place of Gospel dependence in all aspects of our lives.

We will begin the evening of February 17, from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. for *Ash Wednesday*, a service of quiet reflection and a great time to do personal business with God. Following the service, we welcome you to remain and interact with God through silence and private prayer.

Whether or not you attend, I encourage you to use the period of Lent to re-evaluate your life and Christian walk. May we put-off worldliness, selfishness, materialism, and pride and align ourselves with the work and will of the Spirit of God.

Pastor Mark

*Our Leroy Community Chapel Services:*

**Ash Wednesday Repentance Service – 7-8 p.m.**

**Palm Sunday Holy Week Services – 9:15 & 11:00 a.m.**

**Good Friday Communion Service – 7-8:30 p.m.**

**Resurrection Sunday Easter Services – 8:00, 9:15, 11:00 a.m.**

## Frequently Asked Questions

***What is the Lenten season, and why is it set apart?***

It is a period of six weeks preceding the anniversary of the Savior's death, and is set apart as a special season of fasting, penitence, and prayer.

***Why is it called Lent?***

Because it always comes in the spring of the year, and the old Saxon word *lent* means "spring."

***With what remarkable event in Jesus' life does the Lenten season correspond?***

The forty days that He spent fasting in the wilderness.

***Why is the first day of Lent called Ash Wednesday?***

It is called so from the custom that prevailed in the early church of sprinkling ashes on the heads of penitents the first day of Lent in token of humiliation and sorrow for sin.

***Are there any examples of this custom mentioned in the Bible?***

Yes, the example of Daniel, David, and the people of Nineveh, and that which our Lord himself refers to in Matthew 11:21.

***If Lent is only forty days' duration, why does it begin forty-six days before Easter?***

There are six Sundays in Lent, and as all Sundays are feast days in honor of the Resurrection, they are taken out. To make up for these, six days are added to the beginning of the season.

***How should Christians observe the Lenten season?***

As a special season for drawing near to God with a heart of penitence, charity, and devotion. It is also appropriate to fast and abstain from those things that tend to draw one away from the heart of God. Build into the season added times of prayer and silence for personal devotion with God.

***What is the object of keeping Lent?***

To go deeper in humility before God, to purify the heart from sin, and to unite us more closely to the Savior.

***Why do we fast?***

1. Because the heart is so easily pleased with the gifts of God rather than the Giver and we must train ourselves to have no idols of the heart, but worship God alone.
2. Because life gets busy and we often neglect to tend the soil of our souls unless some special time is set apart to do so.
3. Because heaven is our home and earth is temporary. We need the focus that comes from going without temporary things for the sake of the glory that will be revealed.
4. Because it was as expected by Jesus (Matthew 6:16-18) with a warning to not practice your righteousness before men (Matthew 6:1). The goal is a humbling of the heart, not a performing for God or men.
5. Because the Bridegroom (Jesus) is gone and we look to His future return (Matthew 9:14-17). We fast not like those in the Old Testament who waited for the Messiah to come (the old wine), but we fast in the shadow of the completed work of Christ on the cross expectant for His return (the new wine).