



# Weekly Booster

## CHURCH STAFF

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Alan Hutchison,

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### Sunday Facebook Host

Craig Harris,

### Facebook Contributors

Pastor David B. Clark,

Barb Cunningham,

Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

### Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

Jeff Hiser, Jodi Anderzhon



## Observing Lent

Lent is a period of fasting, repentance, and spiritual discipline in the Christian faith, traditionally observed during the 40 days leading up to Easter. In 2023, it starts on Wednesday, February 23, and ends on Maundy Thursday, which is on April 6th. This 40-day period is traditionally a time for believers to focus on their relationship with God and to consider their own sin and mortality.

One day a large crowd pressed around Jesus while he preached (Luke 5:1–11). The Lord wanted to use Peter's boat as a floating platform from which to address the multitude, so he asked the future apostle to push the vessel out a little way from shore (Luke 5:3)—not in itself a particularly remarkable request. But Peter's compliance with his request paved the way for a life-changing blessing. From his example, we also learn how essential it is to obey God in even the smallest matters.

After all the excitement and celebration of Advent, as well as its public observance in church services around the globe, the season of Lent gives individuals the time and space to quiet their minds and hearts and look inward. This is a season of quiet introspection, as winter wanes and the growing light of longer days points Christ-followers toward the true Light that came into the world to give us all life.

Lent gives Christians around the world time and space to reflect on what the birth of Jesus points toward: the life, ministry, passion, and death of Jesus. The celebration of Easter that immediately follows Lent is typically bright, joyous, and happy, but while we wait to celebrate that world-changing day with Christians around the world, Lent gives Christians a time to look inward, to pause and consider what Jesus' saving work means for each one of us.

*Continued page 2*

*“Faith is putting all your eggs in God’s basket.”*

### Reminders

#### February 11<sup>th</sup>

Men’s Bible Study – 8:00 a.m.

#### February 12<sup>th</sup>

Youth, Jr/Sr Sunday School  
Confirmation – 6:00 p.m.  
HS Youth Group – 7:00 p.m.

#### February 15<sup>th</sup>

Encountering the New Testament  
Study with Pastor David - Noon  
Praise Team - 5:00 p.m.  
NO Choir – 6:45 p.m.

#### February 16<sup>th</sup>

T.O.P.S. – 5:30 p.m.

#### February 19<sup>th</sup>

Men’s Monthly Breakfast-8:00 am

#### February 22<sup>nd</sup>-April 6<sup>th</sup>

Lent Season

#### February 22<sup>nd</sup>

Ash Wednesday Service - TBA

\*\*Worship Assistants are needed  
for February 26<sup>th</sup>

\*\* Fellowship Volunteers needed  
sign-up in Fellowship Hall



### Lent - Continued from page 1

#### The Benefits of Observing Lent

Observing Lent can have a number of spiritual benefits. As people prepare their hearts and minds to remember Jesus’ saving work and deep personal sacrifice, it can encourage individuals to draw closer to God through a deep study of the Scriptures leading to a resulting deepening of their faith.

One common practice that many Christians undertake is to read several penitent Psalms as a way to begin their observation of Lent. Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143 are the ones typically read by Christians who want to understand the condition of their own hearts through the timeless words of the psalmists.

Or consider looking into using one of these resources:

#### ***NIV Once-A-Day 40 Days to Easter Devotional***

Gain a greater understanding of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus through 40 carefully selected Scripture passages, devotion, meditations, and prayer.

#### ***The Hope of Easter: 40 Days of Reading and Reflection***

Reflect on Jesus’ life, sacrificial death, and resurrection through Scripture readers from the Gospel of John, short reflections with journaling prompts, and room to write your thoughts each day.

The practice of studying the Scriptures as a way of increasing your devotion to God is just one of many benefits to observing this time of quiet contemplation. Others include:

**Deeper Gratitude:** As we focus on the sacrifice of Jesus and the absolutely unearned grace that allows us to participate in the life and love of God, we gain a greater realization that Jesus’ love filters down into every area of our lives. As the Roman philosopher Cicero once said, “Gratitude is the mother of all virtues.” Fostering that gratitude on a daily basis opens the door to all kinds of other positive virtues in our family, work, and personal lives. “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

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*“Come to worship, leave to serve.”*

## Volunteers Needed



## Church Office Hours

**\*\* Children & Jr.-Sr. High  
Sunday School 10:15  
Questers (Adults) 10:30**

**Monday**  
9:00-11:00  
12:00-3:00

**Tuesday**  
9:00-11:00  
12:00-3:00

**Wednesday**  
**CLOSED**

**Thursday**  
9:00-11:00  
12:00-3:00

**Friday**  
9:00-11:00  
12:00-3:00

**\*\*Chancel Choir –**  
Wednesdays, 6:45 p.m.  
Sunday 8:30 a.m.

The front door to the church will be unlocked during office hours and closed only for errands and lunch.

Please continue to call in advance if you need in the church to make sure someone is in the office. If you reach the answering machine please leave your name, number, and a brief message and your call will be returned. Calls after 2:00 p.m. may be returned the next business day.



Which of the following is well known for being beautiful?

- a) Esther
- b) Leah
- c) Sapphira
- d) Deborah

Who told Jacob to visit his father to gain his blessing?

- a) Rachel
- b) Rebekah
- c) Leah
- d) Sarah

Which woman's husband's name means that he is a worthless fellow?

- a) Bathsheba
- b) Ruth
- c) Deborah
- d) Abigail

**Check page 4 for answers from the previous week.**

## Birthdays and Anniversaries



12<sup>th</sup> – Janette Vermillion

14<sup>th</sup> – Todd Maher

16<sup>th</sup> – Faith Dailey

19<sup>th</sup> – Sharon Hiser, Barb Williamson

**\*\*See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added, please call the office, or send an email to [office@shen.church](mailto:office@shen.church)**

**Shenandoah First United  
Methodist Church**

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Church E-mail  
[office@shen.church](mailto:office@shen.church)

Same address – a new look at  
<https://shen.church>



<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church,  
Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>



Services are now on our Youtube  
channel only.

<https://www.youtube.com/@shen.church8192/streams>

**\*Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: Terry Stafford**

**Call to Worship**

**Leader:** Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

**People:** Happy are those who keep God's decrees, who seek the Lord with their whole heart.

**L:** O that my ways may be steadfast in keeping God's statutes!

**P:** Then I shall not be put to shame having my eyes fixed on the commandments of the Lord.

*“You Have Heard That It Was Said”*

**Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20**

**New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9**

**Third Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:38-48**

**Songs**

**Trust and Obey #467**

**A Wilderness Wandering People #3113**

**Thy Word Is a Lamp #601**

**Shout to the People #2074**

**Last Week's Attendance**

**In-Person Worship - 71**

**Online Worship – 17**

**Our Mission:**

***“Know & Serve God by Sharing Christ's Love.”***

**Our Vision:**

***“We will grow in holiness, our community will thrive, & we will make a difference in our world.”***

**Answers for 5<sup>th</sup> are a) Thomas d) Righteousness c) girl waters him and the camel**

**Quiz Hints – Q1) Esther Q2) Genesis Q3) 1Samuel**

**Lent - Continued from page 2**

**Freedom from Sin:** As we gratefully acknowledge that once-and-for-all-time sacrifice for the sins of the world, we understand that the burden of sin is ultimately taken away. That acknowledgment gives us a greater sense of empowerment as we focus on clearing our hearts and minds of the sin that seems to daily oppress us, empowers us to resist temptation (James 4:7), and helps us to be more courageous in helping others to understand that they too can experience this kind of ultimate freedom from the guilt of sin. "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:1-4).

**Perspective on the Day's Stresses:** As we foster more of a feeling of grateful reliance on God's care, love, and direction for our lives due to the presence of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), we can alleviate some of the daily stress that we experience. As we become more reliant on the Spirit's direction, we begin to understand more and more what it means to rely on God's loving care and direction for even the small decisions and stresses that we experience in our daily lives.

**Focus on Forgiveness:** As we have been forgiven, so we must also forgive (Colossians 3:12-13). As we consider the burden of punishment that Jesus has taken away from us, we also can consider extending forgiveness to others around us, in big and small ways. And in doing so, we will find greater peace and contentment in our own lives as we begin to understand that forgiveness benefits us most of all.

**More Christlikeness:** Contemplating the life and sacrifice of Jesus, the Savior of the world, can generate within us the characteristics that are the goal of the Christian life: the fruit of the Spirit that lives inside of those who have put their trust in Jesus (Galatians 5:22-23). These are personal qualities that, when we consider how they can change us, are more present in our lives and more obvious to the people around us. After all, that's the hallmark of the changed life of the Christian: because we understand that Jesus has saved us, we want to exhibit in our lives and hearts and integrate into our daily interactions the positive characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

**Proactive Life Change:** As we review the list of potential benefits that observing Lent brings, we can also spend time creating a strategy to integrate the fruit of the Spirit into our lives as we fulfill the mandate that Jesus left with his disciples (and that includes all Christians), which we read in Matthew 28:18-20: "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.'" This mandate also came with the ultimate promised reassurance of Jesus' help, as follows: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."



## The Practice of Abstaining During Lent

Many people around the world associate the season of Lent with giving up something for a time. And it's true, millions of Christians observe such a practice as a symbol of self-sacrificial devotion in recognition of the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf.

Pope Francis, in a 2019 post, beautifully described this practice in the following way. Observing a period of self-sacrifice involves "learning to change our attitude towards others and all of creation, turning away from the temptation to 'devour' everything to satisfy our voracity and being ready to suffer for love, which can fill the emptiness of our hearts."<sup>1</sup>

By abstaining from certain pleasures or making sacrifices during Lent, individuals can demonstrate their devotion to God and strengthen their commitment to following Jesus. The idea of this self-sacrificial practice is to sharpen one's focus on the sacrifice of Jesus himself. Some ideas for this include the following:

- Fasting: Observant Catholics routinely give up eating meat on Fridays during this season; other Christians dedicate themselves to giving up a meal a day, or several meals a week, and devoting that time to prayer. (As you look into any kind of physical fasting, be sure to consult with your doctor to ensure that doing so doesn't have any negative health benefits.)

- Giving up one or more social media outlets during this 40-day period.
- Deciding to turn off your phone at a specific time of day.
- Abstaining from drinking alcohol or eating a particularly unhealthy food item.
- Turning off talk radio in your car while you're driving to or from work and spending that time in prayer. Perhaps you'll be surprised at how much less stressful that commute is.
- Starting a new daily habit of spending time in God's Word.
- Spending time walking outside and taking the time to pray to God on a regular basis. Fostering conversation with our Creator is always a positive choice.

Of course, we can also lean toward giving up something that can perhaps be more meaningful and positive in our lives, such as bitterness, negative self-talk, or comparing ourselves to others. These take a bit more work but bring a mindfulness to our everyday life that can have many positive life benefits.

## The Practice of Giving During Lent

In addition to the personal benefits of observing Lent, the practice can also have a positive impact on the community. By focusing on spiritual growth and service during this time, believers can be more attuned to the needs of others and be more inclined to reach out and help those in need.

Part of this time-honored Christian tradition during the season of Lent is the practice of giving alms or donating more than we otherwise typically do to those who are less fortunate, or to local or global missions organizations. As we do so, we imitate what Jesus did in giving us the free gift of his grace in providing us salvation.

What we give and how we give can take many forms. The potential ways that we give of our time, talents, and treasure are as varied and individual as each person. For younger people, volunteering their time to help others in a church or neighborhood setting is a good option. For others with more financial means at their disposal, perhaps financial giving is more of a possibility than giving of one's time.

However, this doesn't have to be complicated. As charity begins at home, start with spending more intentional time with your loved ones. Then branch out—perhaps there is a single mom in your family or neighborhood who could use some help with her kids while she runs errands. Inviting her kids over for dinner or taking them to a park or a movie can provide a much-needed respite for a busy mom. Or is there a family with a special-needs member in your church or community? Ask them how you might be able to help them to care for that individual, whether it means supplying them with some physical accommodation or spending time with him or her.

Perhaps you could write cards to people in your church who are in need of encouragement. Or find out whether your local VA hospital has a list of names of individuals that you could write to. When you spend time reaching out to others, you're giving of your time to help make their day better.

As you consider how you might integrate this tradition of giving into your Lenten observance, develop an action plan with specific dates and amounts of time or money you want to give. Add reminders to your calendar to call individuals who can help you accomplish your goals. And spend time praying about what to set aside for others during this time period.

### **Making Positive Life Changes as a Result of Observing Lent**

A small positive change, implemented in observance of this coming time of year, can have large and lasting benefits after the season of Lent is over.

By denying oneself some of the things that distract us from our devotion to God, the season of Lent can help sharpen personal reflection and foster self-improvement. This short, 40-day period allows us to take stock of our own flaws and failings. By making positive moves toward real-life change, and by committing to following through on making those small changes in one's life more of a habit, individuals can grow in self-awareness and become better versions of themselves as well as draw closer to the God who has shown us his love through his Son.

How will you observe the season of Lent this year? February 23 is coming up quickly; be sure to put a reminder on your calendar today, and start thinking how you will join with the global Christian community in taking the time to pause and reflect on how you can honor Christ's sacrifice in your own life.

<sup>1</sup><https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2019/02/26/190226d.html>

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Suggested donation list for **February 2023**. We appreciate any and all donations! If you have questions or would like to tour the Food Pantry, please call 712-246-2093.

- ✓ Non-sugared cereal
- ✓ Mandarin oranges and pineapple
- ✓ Jelly
- ✓ Dry powdered milk
- ✓ Tuna and Chicken Helpers
- ✓ Chili and Chunky style soup
- ✓ Cake and brownie mixes
- ✓ Taco shells and taco seasoning
- ✓ Kleenex
- ✓ Shampoo and conditioner



1. No choir practice on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>. Choir practice will resume on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:45 p.m.
2. Lent season, Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> to Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>.
3. February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ash Wednesday. Service time TBA.
4. Good Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Service time TBA.