

Lent began last Wednesday. For Presbyterians, Lent is “a time of prayer, fasting, and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days — like the flood of Genesis, Moses’ sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah’s journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah’s call to Ninevah to repent, and Jesus’ time of testing in the wilderness. (The Sundays in Lent are not counted in this reckoning of the time between Ash Wednesday and Easter, as every Lord’s Day is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.)”

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/christianyear/worship-resources-lent>

In coordinatence with our church school, our church is going to try something new in our Lenten observances. Each Sunday, we will explore one focus to bring us closer to God.

First is **fasting** - giving something up, or skipping a meal for a period of time. This intends to begin the journey of spiritual growth and center on God. Then we will focus on **prayer**, which is a traditional sibling of fasting. Next comes Scripture as we **listen** for God speaking. This will be followed by a move to **simplify** and declutter our life. And then we will **unplug**, which will bring relief from the constant bombardment of the media, including social media. And finally, **refocusing** on the list or exploring own way of growing closer to God, including **generosity and justice**.

Last year I suggested this list of things we could do to deepen our spirituality; I think it still holds.

1. Set a time to pray every day. Start with the Lord's Prayer. You can find a copy of it quite quickly, but here is the Presbyterian version.
(No sins or trespasses)

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us

our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

2. Return to Worship or come to a special worship service or spiritual group at your church. Attend each week from now through Easter.
3. Read a faith-oriented book. Adam Hamilton has authored several that are quite accessible without dumbing down the faith.
4. Attend a Bible Study. Ask your religious leader to start one or study with another group if your community doesn't have one.
5. Read a book on racism. One of my favorites is "No Longer White" by Robert Jones.
6. Repent and Repair. Change your heart and mind and make amends with someone.
7. Forgive someone! Really forgive them.
8. Volunteer in some ministry or social service work. Your church or a church near you and your community social service agencies and charities have many opportunities.
9. Visit someone isolated by their circumstances, call regularly **and** send cards
10. Practice generosity. Give an additional contribution to some church, charity, or social justice cause you trust.

May God richly bless your Lenten journey to the cross and beyond. If you are daring, you could pick all ten, but I don't want to burden you, so I suggest you choose just one.

But wait, there's more!

11. Pay for someone's order behind you in the drive-through.
- Peace and Blessings for Lent.