



Hope Ev. Lutheran Church

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✠ THE HOPE LUTHERAN ✠

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The Shape of Lent

We have once again entered the holy, prayerful, penitential season of Lent. As we proceed through this most meaningful time, let's ponder the shape of Lent.

OVERVIEW

From ancient times, Jesus' Resurrection ("Easter Sunday") has been the chief and central feast day of the church year. Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection are the heart and core of the Christian faith and life.

Over time the season of Lent developed as a 40-day season of preparing for the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. Through the Church's history, this time of preparation focused on *catechesis*, instruction in the faith for people coming into the Church and re-learning the faith for those already in the Church. For the forty days prior to Easter, instruction in the faith would intensify and *catechumens* (those learning the faith) would prepare for their Baptism at Easter. For those already baptized, they would prepare for Easter by means of the disciplines of fasting, praying, and giving to the poor.

Now, if you take your calendar and count the days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, you will certainly count more than 40 days. This is because the Sundays are not included in the "40 days of Lent." Why is that? Because even through the somber season of Lent, Sundays still focus on the resurrected Lord. Every Sunday is a "little Easter."

SHAPE OF THE SEASON

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday (Feb. 17, this year) begins the season of Lent and brings us back to the life of somber repentance. It was *our* sin that led to the Son of God being humiliated and crucified. It was *our* sin that

caused the sin, decay, and death in God's created world. Ash Wednesday calls us to repent, or think differently, of our sin. Thus we confess our sins. Yes, sin really is that bad! That's why our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to suffer, die, and rise again.

We should also mention that Lent is *not* a 40-day period of watching Jesus suffer and die, nor a time to feel sorry for Him. Rather, Lent is a time to learn to live in our Baptism, that is, in dying and rising with Christ. Lent is a time to return to our Catechism and be renewed in the basic teachings of the Christian faith and life. Fred Lindemann wrote: "The basic purpose of Lent was the preparation for the rising to newness of life at Easter" (*The Sermon and the Propers*, III:43). This is still the purpose of Lent.

Sundays in Lent

The Sundays through the season of Lent are called "Sundays *in* Lent" (vs. Sundays "of" Lent) because they are not counted in the 40 days of the season. The texts and themes of these Sundays address both the catechumens and the faithful. These texts and themes instruct us in the faith yet again and prepare us for the Passion of Our Lord coming in Holy Week.

These Latin names of these Sundays come from the Introit (Entrance Psalm) for each of the Sundays. (At Hope we don't use the Introit, but an Entrance Hymn that serves the same purpose of introducing the theme of the Sunday.)

The **First Sunday in Lent** gives us the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, Matthew 4:1-11. (The Latin name is *Invocabit*, meaning "he will call.") Just as Satan tempted Adam and Eve in Paradise, he also tempts Jesus in the wilderness. He also tempts the Christian in the wilderness of the world. However, whereas Adam and Eve succumbed to the temptation, Jesus

did not. He overcame the old satanic foe. Our Lord overcomes the devil and his temptations on our behalf too.

The **Second Sunday in Lent** gives us the Canaanite woman, Matthew 15:21-28, as she figuratively wrestles with Jesus and with trusting Him. (The Latin name is *Reminiscere*, meaning “remember.”) Both catechumens and seasoned Christians wrestle with God as they learn and grow in the faith. Thus we pray, “Lord, have mercy.” We also pray, “Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love” (Ps. 25:6). As Jesus healed the Canaanite woman’s daughter, He promises to heal us at Easter.

On the **Third Sunday in Lent** we hear of the cosmic war between Jesus Christ and the devil. (The Latin name is *Oculi*, meaning “my eyes.”) In Luke 11:14-28, Jesus is the Stronger Man who binds strong Satan for us, robs him of his weapons, and divides the spoils. Jesus will indeed win the Easter victory! Our battles against our sinful flesh, the world, and the devil will not be in vain. Thus, we fix our eyes on the One who conquers Satan for us.

On the **Fourth Sunday in Lent** (Latin: *Laetare*, meaning “rejoice”) we get a little reprieve from the solemn austerity of Lent. It is a brief pause in the rigors of the Lenten fast, and we get to be refreshed for the final leg of the journey to Holy Week and Easter. We hear the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 from John 6:1-15. Ralph Gehrke summarizes the theme of this Sunday: “On the fourth Sunday great joy breaks through the earnestness of battle, and we enjoy a ‘preview’ of Easter; in fact, in many places this Sunday in Lent is called ‘Little Easter.’ The Gospel speaks of the feeding of the five thousand with the bread of life and points to the wondrous food of the Sacrament which sustains us in life’s battle” (*Planning the Service*, 47).

After this little break of joy, we return to the rigors of Lent. And *now* is the time to plunge into the Passion of Our Lord on the **Fifth Sunday in Lent** (Latin name: *Judica*, meaning “vindicate”). High Priest Jesus comes from His eternal home to dispense eternal life for us. How does He do this? As we hear from John 8:46-59, the One whose day Abraham rejoiced to see, the One who equates Himself with the great “I AM,” God Himself, will suffer rejection and death. This fifth week of Lent prepares us for the Suffering of Jesus, and then we turn to Holy Week.

Holy Week

Palm Sunday and Holy Week are certainly part of Lent. We might also view this whole week as a separate “mini-season.” This most sacred time of the Christian year certainly deserves to stand on its own. This is the focal point of the entire Church Year. Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany all point to this most sacred time; and the remainder of the Church Year flows out of this fountainhead.

Palm Sunday (Latin: *Palmarum*, “of the palms”) gives us Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem as He rides on a humble donkey. In *Lutheran Service Book*, we also get to hear the Passion Reading from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus enters Jerusalem in stark humility as He comes for the express purpose of dying on the cross. The days of Holy Week actually lead us through the last days of our Lord’s life before He was sacrificed on the cross for us.

On **Holy (Maundy) Thursday**, we begin arriving at the pinnacle of the Church Year. From John 13 we hear of Jesus’ ministry of love in washing the feet of His disciples, and that ministry of love shows up most prominently in the Holy Supper.

On **Good Friday** we hear St. John’s account of Jesus’ Passion and Crucifixion (John 18-19). This is the most proper time to focus on the Passion of Our Lord and ponder what it means for our life and our salvation. The hymn by Fortunatus (c. 530-609) captures the meaning quite well:

*Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle;
Sing the ending of the fray.
Now above the cross, the trophy,
Sound the loud triumphant lay;
Tell how Christ, the world’s redeemer,
As a victim won the day. (LSB 454:1)*

Of course, our Lenten “journey” does not end on Good Friday, but that’s a topic for another season of the Church Year, and another article.

✠ Pastor Randy Asbury

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LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Newsletter article – March 2021

Hudson Taylor, a Nineteenth Century British missionary to China, is reported to have said, “God’s work, done in God’s way, will not lack God’s supply.” To know God’s way, we need to know His Holy Word. Or to say it another way: you need to know your Bible.

St. Paul, before he spends two chapters on giving, wrote that every thought is to be taken captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:5). Doctrine matters. And doctrine matters because the Scriptures matter. And the Scriptures matter because this is where we learn the teaching of Christ.

Our thoughts must be brought into line with the teaching of Scripture so that our work is what God wants done and so that we do this work in His way.

A good tree bears good fruit. A bad tree bears bad fruit. We have been made good trees in holy baptism. We are fertilized and pruned for bearing good fruit by constantly hearing God’s Word preached and taught in sermon and Bible Class and in receiving the life-giving, faith-sustaining food of the Lord’s Supper. Remember your doctrine, hold on to the Lord’s teaching, and your thoughts will be taken captive to the obedience of Christ.

Bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ is recognizing that God does provide. The Lord’s Prayer teaches us to pray for daily bread. Praying this day in and day out reminds us that the Lord is the giver of our daily bread,

and that we are to give thanks for His daily provision of it. God is rarely early and never late in His work, as Abraham learned on the mount of the Lord it will be provided. The Lord’s generosity forms our generosity in return.

Thus, we set aside for the work of God a generous, first-fruits, proportion of the daily bread that God has given to us. This act of trust in the Lord’s provision is the working out of our faith in Him. When budgetary discussions pop up, our natural reaction is to point fingers. But remember your doctrine, and what your mother

taught about pointing fingers. Our first natural reaction is not always right. In fact, when our thoughts are brought into captivity of Christ, our first reaction should be repentance. It should raise questions in our own lives. As good trees in Christ who are to bear good fruit, we should ask whether our thoughts have been taken captive by

obedience to Christ. Have we given generously? Have we given our first-fruits? You know. And God knows. “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him” (2 Chron 16:9).

God will provide. He always has and He always will. He gives His meat in due season. He has not left you as orphans but has grafted you into His own family. You belong to Him. Remember this, letting this thought dwell in you richly. And you will then be rich toward others.



Notes from the Kantor

A Liturgical Music Users Guide for Lent

Dear Congregants of Hope,

As I write this, we are now nearly a week into the season of Lent. As many of you already know there are certain changes and adjustments to the weekly liturgy that go into effect during the season of Lent. The most prominent and well-known change is that we exclude the word "Alleluia" from our sung and spoken liturgy and hymns.

Based on the Hebrew word, *hallelu yah*, meaning "Praise the Lord," alleluia has been a word of great praise to God in the life of the church and was prominent in early Christian liturgies. Because of the penitential character of the season of Lent in the Western church, singing or saying the word "alleluia" has historically been suspended during Lent's forty days. This period of individual and congregational reflection on the quality of our baptismal faith and life suggests that the joyful nature of alleluia is more appropriately reserved for our Easter celebrations when it is given full and jubilant voice.

The omission of alleluia during Lent goes back at least to the fifth century in the western church. The custom of actually bidding it farewell, however, developed in the Middle Ages. The hymn "Alleluia, Song of Gladness" (*Lutheran Service Book* 417) contains a translation of an 11th century Latin text that compares an alleluia-less Lent to the exile of the Israelites in Babylon. The text then anticipates the joy of Easter when glad alleluias will return in all their heavenly splendor.

We also eliminate the Hymn of Praise, which is usually the "Gloria" or "This is the Feast." Again, this is an outward display of restraint during this penitential season.

One of the new aspects of our sung liturgical life together that has been added is the Tract. The Tract is a historical portion of the liturgy used in place of the Alleluia verse that precedes the Gospel. You may be familiar with a Common Tract from Divine Service 2, "Return to the Lord your God." Like the assigned readings, psalms, collects, and Hymn of the Day, the Tract is a proper text, in that it specific to each service. The Tract is commonly made up of various Psalm verses that align with the upcoming Gospel reading and the general themes of the day.

Finally, if you worshiped with us in person or online for the First Sunday of Lent you had the opportunity to sing the Great Litany. The Great Litany is a prescribed order of prayers that is commonly attached to penitential seasons. We pray the Litany in place of the general Prayers of the Church on the First Sunday in Lent and the Second Sunday of Advent as a way to model its use for personal devotion. You are welcome to sing it with your family, or you can make use of the spoken setting in your *Lutheran Service Book* (p. 288).

I look forward to leading the congregation's song during this season and the triumphant return of our unhindered praises.

Blessed Lententide,
Kantor Janssen

“All ceremonies should serve the purpose of teaching the people what they need to know about Christ” (Augsburg Confession, 24:3). This month we continue our spiritual pilgrimage to Calvary in the great 40 days of Lent. For the great 40 days of Lent, we focus on God’s great works of saving us from our sin and death. The time of Lent draws our attention to Christ and His great Suffering (“Passion”) and Crucifixion to save us sinners. In April our somber repentance will turn to joyous gladness as we celebrate our Lord’s victory over death. He certainly has trampled down death by His death, and He gives us His new, resurrected, eternal life! The Lord’s Service in the Lord’s House will shape us this way:

Date	Day in Church Year	Gospel Reading	Gospel Focus (Theme of the Day)
March 7	Third Sunday in Lent	Luke 11:14-28	The Lamb of God - When Jesus opens the mouth of the mute, devil-possessed man, He breaks through into Satan’s territory. That same victory is ours in Holy Baptism where we “renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways.”
March 14	Fourth Sunday in Lent	John 6:1-15	The Bread of Life - In the feeding of the 5000 Jesus Christ shows Himself as the true Bread of Life, the very same Bread of Life who comes to us in the Lord’s Supper.
March 21	Fifth Sunday in Lent	John 8:42-59	The Great High Priest - Christ reveals the “secret” of His office of High Priest: before Abraham was, He is. Whoever hears and clings to Christ gains a share in the life that is stronger than death.
March 28	Palm Sunday	John 12:12-19 & Matthew 27:11-54	The Man of Sorrows - Jesus the Christ enters Jerusalem in triumph and is crowned as our meek and lowly King.



PRO-LIFE UPDATE

As of now, there are no abortions being done in Missouri! As reported by several pro-life and news groups, the last licensed abortion facility in Missouri has stopped doing abortions. This was the Planned Parenthood in St. Louis. They do still refer for abortions to their facility in Illinois. The pro-life laws in Missouri have helped protect women and children. Sadly, there were a number of emergencies and ambulance calls over the last several years at this abortion clinic. There are still prayer vigils at this location and at the two abortion clinics in nearby IL.

40 Days for Life is beginning. This is a

prayer vigil organized by Coalition for Life from February 20- March 31. Churches and groups can adopt a time slot to cover at the

Planned Parenthood in St. Louis or Fairview Heights. This prayer vigil is happening across the country. If you would like more information, please contact Judy Maichel, 314-352-1319, mjmaichel@juno.com.

Coalition for Life is also planning the March on the Arch for Saturday, March 6. There is a prayer walk from 10:00am-2:00pm. Marchers will depart at fifteen minute intervals on a 1.5 mile prayer walk, starting outside the St. Louis Planned Parenthood. LCMS President Matthew Harrison will lead one of the prayer walks. To sign-up, go to <https://www.coalitionforlifestl.com/march-2/>.

The young adult group STL Pro-Life Future has a number of pro-life events, including prayer vigils at the abortion clinics and participating in the March on the Arch. Check out their Facebook page for more information.

Lutherans For Life of Missouri is looking to sponsor a "For Life" video contest open to all ages. They are looking for help to organize this. If you know someone who could help with this, please contact Diane Albers at <lflofmo@gmail.com>.

There have been over 62 million babies killed by abortion in our country since 1973. Please continue to pray that abortion comes to an end and children are welcomed as blessings from God.

LCMS LIFE CONFERENCE MARCH 19-20, 2021

We are excited to feature many experts on Life Ministry topics in the upcoming Making Disciples > Valuing Life conference. Presentations will be available on-demand as soon as you log into the conference.

Presenters include:

- **Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Gibbs emeritus professor Concordia Seminary**
- **Sarah Gulseth, KFUEO and the Lutheran Ladies Lounge podcast**
- **Dr. Donna Harrison, AAPLOG**
- **Rev. Dr. James Lamb, Lutheran Family Service**
- **Stephanie Neugebauer, Friends for Life podcast**
- **Rev. Peter Preus, author and emeritus LCMS pastor**
- **Rev. Michael Salemink, Lutherans for Life**
- **Deac. Dr. Kim Schave, Humanitri**
- **Rev. Dr. Kevin Voss, Concordia University Wisconsin**
- **Rev. Roberto Weber, Pastor en la Iglesia Evangelica Luterina Argentina**
- **Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, Minnesota South District**



EASTER LILIES will be used on Easter Sunday in the altar area. If you wish to place a plant in honor or memory of someone, please pick up an envelope from the narthex or call Carol, 752-0525, **before March 22**. Lilies are \$8.00 each and are yours to take home after the service on Easter.



Please notice there are Lent daily devotional booklets and calendars for kids in the basket on the small table where bulletins are picked up before services. Please pick up a copy of each for home use.



ST. LOUIS' BEST FISH FRY RETURNS!

St. Luke's Ev. Lutheran Church is still hosting their annual Fish Fry with take-out orders only. Dates are Friday, March 5, 12, 19 and 26.

All dinner plates include one of the following: Cod filet, catfish nuggets, shrimp or chicken strips and a choice of two sides: German potato salad, green beans, macaroni & cheese, cole slaw or French fries. Desserts are an additional \$0.50.

Adults: \$7.50 and children age 10 and under are \$4.50.

3415 Taft Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63111
4:00pm-7:00pm. Call 314-352-1224 to order!



314-352-0014

March 2021

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 7:00 pm Lent Evening Prayer	4	5	6 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
7 <u>Lent 3</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:30 Bible Class/ SSchool 11:45 Confirmation class	8 7:00pm Board of Finance	9	10 7:00 pm Lent Evening Prayer	11	12	13 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
14 <u>Lent 4</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:45 Confirmation class	15	16	17 7:00 pm Lent Evening Prayer	18	19	20 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
21 <u>Lent 5</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:45 Confirmation class	22	23	24 7:00 pm Lent Evening Prayer	25	26	27 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
28 <u>Palm Sunday</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:45 Confirmation class	29	30	31		Elder: 7 – Chad Rolland 14 – Scot Kinnaman 21 – Kevin Robson 28 – Scot Kinnaman	Altar Guild: 7 Spyers/Truebe 14 Asbury/Bergdolt 21 Brown/Patton 28 Keller/Janssen