

LAWNDALE

Presbyterian Church

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Hey Lawndale Family!

I hope you're staying warm today. As you know, we've rescheduled our Ash Wednesday Service for next Wednesday at 6 p.m. So, in view of that, let me remind you that the Lenten season begins today. This is not a required Biblical observance, nor does it earn you spiritual extra credit, nor is it a silver bullet for sanctification. Nevertheless, similar to Advent, it is a practice that large sectors of Jesus' Church through the ages have viewed as beneficial in order to prepare for Easter.

We can trace its origins back to the 4th century with the Council of Nicea. Lent is a 40-day season of fasting, modeled after the 40-day seasons we find in Scripture, such as Moses' 40 days on Mount Sinai, Israel's 40 years in the wilderness and Jesus' 40 day fast at his temptation.

What we practice during Lent is what we always practice in the Christian life, letting go of sin and leaning more on Christ. Nevertheless, it's sound wisdom to incorporate seasons in which we focus in a special way on certain areas of our lives that need attention—and what a better time than that which leads toward Easter Sunday!

So, in Lent we exercise gratitude for Jesus' obedience in our place and self-offering on the cross for our sins, we repent of our sins that necessitated Jesus' cross, we address a particular sin pattern we'd like to put to death more, we may fast from some habit or luxury we feel occupies too much of our hearts, we may add some practice that we'd like to grow in—maybe prayer or bible reading or Scripture memory or family devotions or some kind of service or evangelism or just being still in God's Presence—and we make sure we don't get to Easter and all of a sudden feel the loss of not having anticipated it more. That's really my main aim in calling Lent to yours and my attention. It's too easy for me to let the busyness of Spring crowd out my preparation for the awe of the cross and the joy of the resurrection, which we remember and celebrate in a special way on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. So, however you spend the next several weeks, let's look forward to celebrating these historical events in a special way. And, if you're able, join us for the Ash Wednesday Service next week!

Bill Bradford

Member of the Presbyterian Church in America

"For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."

II Corinthians 4:5