

THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT



PREPARE YOUR HEART FOR EASTER AT RCPO



WHAT IS LENT?

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are at the heart of the Christian gospel, and Good Friday and Easter are two of the most significant celebrations of the Christian year. Lent is a 40-day season of preparation and repentance during which we anticipate Good Friday and Easter. Just as we carefully prepare for big events in our personal lives, such as a wedding or commencement, Lent is a special time of prayer, repentance, and sacrifice that invites us to remember Jesus' passion and celebrate Jesus' resurrection. People often observe it in specific acts of personal prayer, worship, fasting or repentance.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF LENT?

Since the earliest times of the Church, there is evidence of some kind of Lenten preparation for Easter. Lent became more regularized after the legalization of Christianity in A.D. 313. The practice of a forty-day preparation period began in the Christian church during the third and fourth centuries. The number forty carries biblical significance, including the forty years Israel spent in the wilderness and Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness. The word Lent itself is derived from the Anglo-Saxon words *lencten*, meaning "Spring," and *lenctentid*, which means not only "Springtide" but also was the word for "March," the month in which the majority of Lent falls.

WHY IS RCPO PARTICIPATING IN LENT?

We desire to connect people to the deep traditions of our faith and to bring light and meaning to their practice. Since Restoration began in 2010, we have participated in Advent as a church family — a month-long event to prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas. Believing the resurrection of Jesus and its celebration at Easter to be an just as central to our faith, we desire to expand on its celebration at Restoration as well. Lent is not just a Catholic tradition — many Protestant congregations also observe Lent. Lent is also not a requirement for the Christian life — it is simply a chance to call our hearts to reflection and action. It is setting aside days in our calendar to be intentionally grateful for the cross of Christ and to desire that others would be drawn to the sacrifice and victory over sin that happened there.



FORTY DAYS OF LENT

The forty days of Lent begin on Ash Wednesday (February 26th this year) and continue through Holy Week and Easter, not counting Sundays, which are reserved for celebratory worship. At Restoration, we are focusing our period of Lent on both our own repentance from sin and on leading others to the same freedom and life in Christ. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Restoration offers these daily suggestions to help you prepare your heart for Easter.



FEB 26 Ash Wednesday; read Isaiah 40:3-8 and contemplate a world longing for the coming of their Savior.

FEB 27 Build a Lenten playlist that you listen to often during these 40 days. Use worship songs you love.

FEB 28 Place a cross somewhere where you will see it regularly during Lent.

FEB 29 Spend a day with no screens — computer, phone or TV. Pray for someone every time you wish you could turn it on.

MARCH 1 Show up five minutes early to church to sit quietly in the theater and to pray for the service.

MARCH 2 Identify a family member, friend, neighbor or co-worker you could invite to Easter services with you. Pray for the opportunity to ask them.

MARCH 3 Slowly pray through the sections of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). Write down ways that each part of the prayer could change your life.

MARCH 4 Don't spend money on food or drink for yourself today. Look for someone in need to offer what you would have spent on yourself, or donate what you would have spent to an organization that feeds the hungry.

MARCH 5 Hand write a note to someone, encouraging them.

MARCH 6 Confess what's on your heart and any sin to your spouse or close friend. Read 1 John 1 together.

MARCH 7 Wake up earlier than needed. Use the time to be quiet and to pray Psalm 40.

MARCH 8 Mindfully take communion at worship today. Reflect intently on Christ's death on your behalf and His forgiveness of all your sins.

MARCH 9 Be conscious of anyone you are angry with or have not forgiven. Meditate on the cross of Jesus and practice forgiving them.

MARCH 10 Spend at least 20 minutes outside, enjoying and thanking God for the beauty of His creation.

MARCH 11 Walk around your block. Pray for the people in each house.

MARCH 12 Bless someone today with a secret act of kindness or generosity.

MARCH 13 Read Psalm 25, or use a Bible app to listen to it read aloud.

MARCH 14 Set an extra place at your dinner table as a reminder to pray God would fill up the emptiness of those in need.

MARCH 15 Strengthen the family of God: meet someone new today at church.

MARCH 16 Fast for the day (or at least a meal) and ask God to nourish you with His words and presence and will.

MARCH 17 Pray for the peace of Christ to reign in the world.



MARCH 18 Wear simple clothes and no jewelry today as a symbol of mourning the death and brokenness of our lives and the world.

MARCH 19 Fill a trash bag with clothes or items you no longer use and donate them to others who can use them.

MARCH 20 Pray prayers of blessing over your family and friends.

MARCH 21 Memorize Romans 8:1-2.

MARCH 22 Thank a volunteer at church today — someone teaching your kids, greeting your family, setting up or tearing down equipment, serving in the band or in the tech teams.

MARCH 23 Make a conscious choice to put yourself last today — give up your seat, go to the back of line, park in the farthest spot.

MARCH 24 Read Luke 15 slowly and ask God how you should respond. Pray for those who are lost.

MARCH 25 Do something kind for a co-worker with whom you don't always see eye to eye.

MARCH 26 Invite friends into your home and practice hospitality.

MARCH 27 Pray for an extended time — at least 30 minutes.

MARCH 28 Haven't asked that person from March 2 to Easter with you yet? Do it today.

MARCH 29 Share something you learned in the sermon today via email, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram to encourage your friends. Tag Restoration Church Port Orange so we can see it.

MARCH 30 Ask God to reveal the sins you commit that aren't the ones you immediately think of. He's covered those, too.

MARCH 31 Offer to buy Easter basket goodies for a family that is struggling financially.

APRIL 1 Write down sins that are struggles for you. Ask for forgiveness and burn the paper.

APRIL 2 Go to your favorite news site on the web and pray through the articles for the peace of the world.

APRIL 3 Give an undeserved gift.

APRIL 4 Turn off the Internet for the day.

APRIL 5 Worship on Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week.

APRIL 6 Replace your complaints today with gratitude.

APRIL 7 Read Psalm 139.

APRIL 8 Spend 15 minutes in silence. Try no radio on your commute.

APRIL 9 Pray about which one of these Lenten practices you'd like to keep in your life for good.

APRIL 10 Read John 19 and reflect on the day that Jesus went to the cross for the sins of the world.

APRIL 11 Anticipate Easter Sunday. Imagine what it would be like to believe Christ is dead and all hope is lost, as the disciples did on this day.

EASTER He is risen indeed! Join your Restoration family to celebrate His love and victory together.

