



*Seasons
of the Spirit*

PATIENCE & FAITH
PRE-LENT, LENT, EASTER 2026



Seasons of the Spirit

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Holy Communion Women strives to be an extension of Christ's Kingdom in the parish, the community, the nation, and the world. Our hope is that the *Seasons of the Spirit* publication will bring women of the REC together through collaboration and community.

During the season of Lent, we are beckoned to deepen our relationship with God through prayer, reading scripture, attending church services, and fasting. Nourishing our relationship with Christ requires spiritual discipline that further develops patience and faith.

"We can do hard things" is a phrase used daily in my school environment for students with learning differences due to the challenges they face. The phrase "with God's help" is another expression used to establish our thoughts when preparing to encounter a difficult situation. Taking the time to draw closer to God brings Him joy and prepares us for enduring life's struggles. With God's help, we can do hard things. With God's help, we can resist temptations. With God's help, we can develop patience and faith through discipline.

This edition of *Seasons of the Spirit* is filled with inspiring readings about the historical development and meaning of the season of Lent, resisting temptations from the devil, ways to read, ponder, pray, and contemplate God's word, and the inseparability of patience and faith. I hope the pages of this magazine inspire you to reflect on ways you can draw closer to God throughout the season.



Seasons of the Spirit

GRACE



AVOID SIPPING SOUP WITH THE DEVIL
Bishop Ray Sutton

A PRAYER FOR FAITH
St. Augustine's Prayer Book

THE INSEPARABILITY OF PATIENCE & FAITH
Deaconess Marisa Cappuccia

SEASONAL SAMPLINGS

TABLE TALES

TRIED AND TRUE: TIPS & TRICKS

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF
PRE-LENT & LENT
Bishop Charles Camlin

A LAMP UNTO MY FEET
Katia S. Crabb

TIMLY TIDBITS: AROUND THE TABLE
Melissa McGough

O' BE CAREFUL

ETIQUETTE TRIVIA
Julie McGough

GROWTH



A HEART FOR MISSIONS
Kerrie Smith

PASSION HYMN
St. Augustine's Prayer Book

MUSIC FOR LENT
Adrianna McGough

ANSWERS TO ETIQUETTE TRIVIA

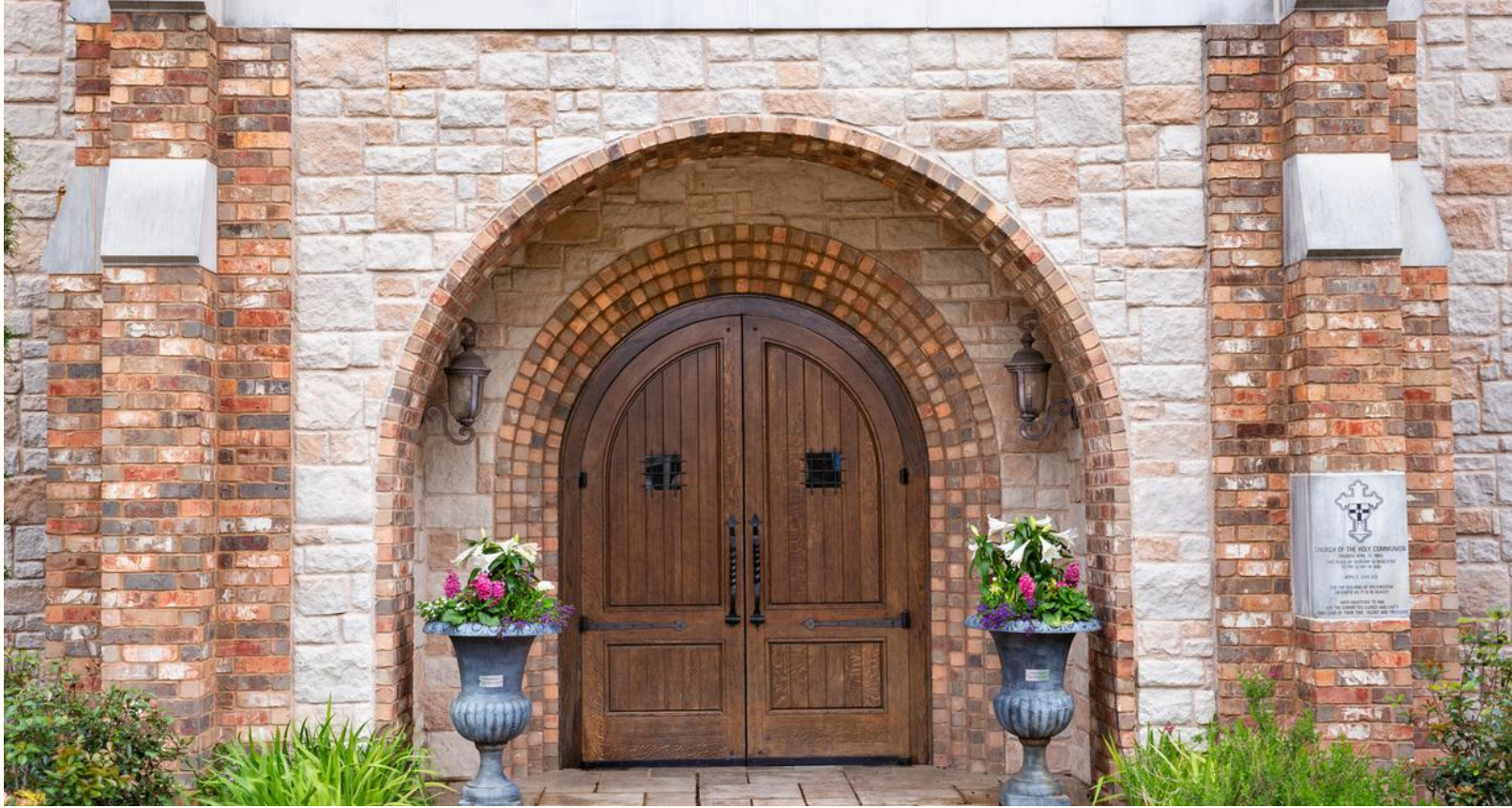
THE NEXT CHAPTER

SILVER CHALICE: GIFTS FOR ALL SEASONS

SHARE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

GIVING





GRACE

O Lord, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end, Amen

Avoid Sipping Soup with the Devil

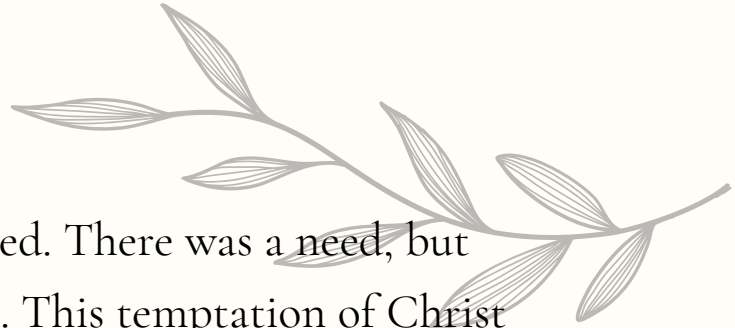
Bishop Ray Sutton



There's an old English proverb that "one shouldn't try to sip soup with the devil through a long spoon." It's too dangerous. It seems Satan's craft often lures people into communing with him at a distance. He tempts them just to taste his delicacies with a long spoon. But before long, he's trapped the person sipping at the other end of the long handle. It's like the little three-year old girl who is caught red-handed with her hand in the cookie jar and her mouth full of cookies. When her mother asked for an explanation, she calmly explained, "I just climbed up to smell the fresh cookies, and my tooth got caught." Sounds like a similar statement made by Adam and Eve when God caught them in the garden.

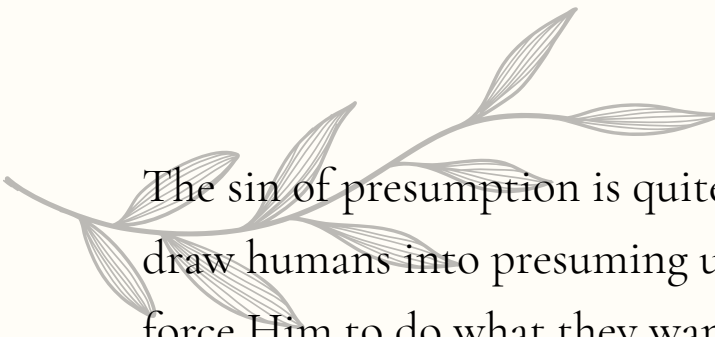
Instead, temptation should be dealt with by decisively and definitively saying no to temptation. The problem is that the devil's temptation is always so subtle that it doesn't look like a temptation. And so, we begin Lent by having to face Jesus' temptations in the wilderness. The Gospel lesson (Matthew 4:1) reveals three different temptations extended to Jesus. Each offers us a glimpse of the long spoon of the devil.

The first temptation of Satan concerned needful things, for it touched a very real need of Jesus, hunger. In the midst of a forty day fast, Satan challenged Jesus to turn stones into bread. He tempted the Lord with something needful.



Jesus could have done what Satan asked. There was a need, but necessity is not enough to obey Satan. This temptation of Christ was quite accurately portrayed in a movie not too long ago, *Needful Things*. It's about Satan's visit to a New England town. He goes about the town enticing people with what they need. In exchange, they must wear an evil talisman that makes them a loyal subject to the devil. The effect of dealing with the devil is devastating. For example, one arthritic lady is portrayed as crippled on the outside but beautiful on the inside. After she puts on the talisman, she becomes gorgeous externally but a hideous person to be around. And so, the devil offers to sip soup with us through a long spoon by appealing to our basic needs, convincing us that we deserve them, offering to meet them in exchange for a piece of our soul. Christ's response was to tell Satan, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (4:4). The real need, in other words, is spiritual food.

Second, Satan tempted with promised things. The devil took what God the Father promised, care and protection, and baited Christ to presume upon God with His very own promise. He took Jesus to the top of the temple, told Him to throw Himself down and trust that angels would catch Him (Matt. 4:5-6). Satan wanted Christ to put Himself in harm's way thereby reversing who serves whom. Instead of Jesus doing the Father's will, the devil wanted the Father to do what Jesus wanted. The temptation was to presume on God with His promises.



The sin of presumption is quite serious and arrogant. Satan seeks to draw humans into presuming upon God, using God's promises to force Him to do what they want. A few years ago a preacher crawled into the prayer tower of a school he founded and told the world he would fast and not come down until God provided over a million dollars. Thankfully, a dear soul gave the money and spared the death of this presumptuous preacher. God wants us to trust His promises, but He does not desire for us to attempt to manipulate Him. The line is fine between promise and presumption, but it is one that a believer must not cross.

Finally, Satan tempted Christ with hopeful things. He took Christ to another high place, this time an "exceeding high mountain." He showed Christ everything this world has to offer and told our Lord that He could have it all if only He would worship the devil. The irony is that Jesus would have it all any way. But the temptation was to get Jesus to trade what would eventually be His for immediate gratification. God wants us to learn to wait. Satan wants us to act precipitously. And so, he preys on our hopes. He offers them to us all the while getting us to worship him.

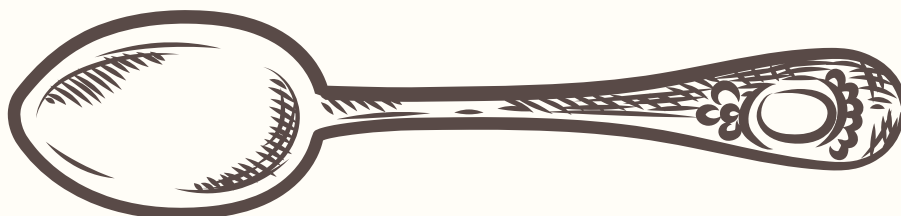
It's like the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, the title of Robert Browning's famous poem. You may remember the story on which the poem is based. A Medieval European town was overrun with rats. An odd character came to town promising to rid the village of their rats for a hundred guilders. To make a long story short, he played a tune on his flute and led the rats out of town.



When he approached the mayor for his fee, the mayor would not pay. So, the pied piper played another melodic tune on his pipe and led all of the children out of town into a mountain never to be seen again. Only one little boy who was lame on one foot and could not keep up escaped the lure of the pied piper. He later told the parents what he had heard when the piper played. The piper's tune was about a land where all things were beautiful, the people brilliant. In this land, the dogs ran faster, bees didn't sting, horses flew with eagle's wings, and no one was ever sick.

So, we must be careful when Satan offers us our hopes. He always has a price, and the price is ultimately our soul. There's nothing wrong with true hope as long as we don't have to worship the devil or sip soup with him through a long spoon.

George MacDonald once observed, "That men may rise above temptation, it is needful that they should have temptation." And so, we will be tempted. But when we are, let us learn from our Lord. In the final analysis, Jesus quotes Holy Scripture to offset Satan's misuse of the Word of God. If we come away with one simple lesson on how to avoid sipping soup with the devil through a long spoon it is to know Holy Scripture and put it to good use against the wiles of the devil. May we learn a little more about how to resist temptation this Lent. Amen.





A Prayer for Faith

St. Augustine's Prayer Book

I come to thee, dear Lord, like the Apostles, saying, increase my faith. Give me a firm and lively faith in thy real presence on the altar. Give me the faith of the beloved disciple to recognize thee and say, It is the Lord! Give me the faith of Peter to confess thee and say, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God! Give me the faith of Thomas, who in the end believed and said my Lord and my God! Give me the faith of all thy Saints to whom this Sacrament has been heaven on earth. In every Communion, at every Mass, and at every visit to thee in this Sacrament, make me to increase in faith and love, and all good things will come to me. O dearest Lord, increase my faith, Amen.



The Inseparability of Patience and Faith

Deaconess Marisa Cappuccia

I am sitting down to write this reflection just as Lent approaches. Ruminating on how patience and faith are connected in Holy Scripture, we find that they are not only connected but inseparable. Faith trusts God; patience waits for Him. One believes the promise — the other endures until it is fulfilled. The Word tells us that through faith and patience, we inherit the promises of God.


“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” Hebrews 6:11-12

Patience endures through the time waiting on the Lord, and faith is trusting that God will do what is best for us. Patience stretches faith across time. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as assurance of things hoped for. Our forefather Abraham is a very clear example: *“After waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.”* (Hebrews 6:15). We can look to Biblical accounts of men like Job, Joseph, and David, and others to see how steady and enduring faith is anchored in trusting God even when fulfillment seems far away. Therefore, we are to imitate the faith of Abraham and the Biblical saints who possessed it.

In the first Chapter of James, we are told that *“knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”* Life’s challenges build patience, which in turn fortifies our faith. Patience carries us through suffering because faith assures us that God is still at work. Even God’s patience toward us is meant to deepen our faith: *“The Lord is not slow... but is patient with you.”* (2 Peter 3:9).

His patience gives space for growth, repentance, and trust. As we experience His patience, our faith becomes more secure. Simply put, we can say that faith says, “God will.” And patience says, “I will wait.” Faith believes the promise, and patience holds on to it.

We read in the Good Friday propers the encouragement of our faith in the words “let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised;)” Jesus is the fulfiller of what is promised to those who have the enduring faith. So as the rest of the proper continues, “and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Amen.



Preparing light meals during the season of Lent might remind us of recipes with fresh produce like herbs, celery, carrots, Napa Cabbage, oranges and limes. Create a fruity salad or find comfort in potato dumplings and savory biscuits. Simple meals can be nutritious to meet the needs of all ages in your family.

SEASONAL SAMPLINGS



HERB BISCUITS

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
3/4 cup cold unsalted butter, diced
3/4 cup buttermilk
2- 3 tsp. dried herbs

*Note: You can use any combination of herbs according to taste. Some nice combinations are basil & oregano, rosemary & garlic, or thyme & sage

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Combine the dry ingredients.
3. Use a pastry cutter, a fork, or your hands to cut in the butter until the butter is worked throughout the flour mixture.
4. Gently stir in the buttermilk until a shaggy dough forms.
5. On a lightly floured surface, pat out a 1 inch rectangle. Fold one end of the rectangle over two times into three layers.
6. Repeat the patting & folding procedure a total of 3 times. (This creates fluffy layers in the biscuits.)
7. Cut the dough into triangles or squares. Place the biscuits on a baking sheet and bake for about 15 minutes.



CHICKEN & GNOCCHI

Ingredients:

6 - 8 chicken thighs
2 Tbsp. Avocado oil
4 stalks celery, sliced or chopped
3 carrots, sliced (can use shredded carrots)
1 large onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, chopped
2 bay leaves
salt & pepper
1 large jar of chicken broth (or fresh)
2 cups fresh spinach
1 cup heavy cream
1 package Gnocchi

- Brown chicken thighs in a Dutch oven with avocado oil, salt and pepper. Set aside to cool and pull apart into pieces.
- In the Dutch oven add celery, carrot, and onion. Cook until the vegetables soften. Add garlic, 2 bay leaves, salt & pepper.
- Add chicken broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium.
- Add chicken and gnocchi. Once gnocchi is tender, add heavy cream and spinach.
- Serve with freshly grated Asiago cheese.



SPRING TIME SPARKLE

Ingredients:

1 oz. Lime juice, freshly squeezed
Fresh strawberries (or other berries)
½ oz. simple syrup (equal parts dissolved sugar and water)
3 - 4 oz. sparkling water, club soda, or ginger ale
Sugar for glass rim
Fresh mint for garnish



Prepare: Rub the rim of a glass with a lime slice. Firmly press the glass rim onto a plate covered with sugar. Place the glass into the freezer to set. Muddle the simple syrup with mint leaves, lime wedges, and strawberries (or other berry of choice). Add ice, then shake until chilled. Strain into the prepared glass and top with sparkling water. Garnish with fresh mint, lime, and/or strawberries. Enjoy!

MANDARIN ORANGE SALAD

1 - 8 oz. can moist coconut
2 - 10 oz. cans of Mandarin Oranges,
drained
1 - 14 oz. can crushed pineapple,
drained
1 pint sour cream
16 large marshmallows cut into
eighths

- Drain oranges and pineapple
- Cut marshmallows
- Mix all ingredients together
- Chill in the refrigerator 24 hours before serving

Cut marshmallows will thicken the salad



NAPA CABBAGE SALAD

Ingredients:

1 head of Napa Cabbage
6 green onions, chopped
2 pkgs. Ramen Noodles (Discard seasoning)
½ cup sesame seeds
1 pkg. slivered almonds
¾ stick butter



Directions:

1. Chop cabbage and onions.
2. Crush noodles and mix with sesame seeds, almonds, and butter.
3. Saute. Watch carefully as it will burn. Drain and cool on paper towels. Store in a jar.

Dressing: Dissolve ½ cup avocado oil, ½ cup sugar. Then add 1 Tbsp. soy sauce, ¼ tsp. salt, ¼ cup wine vinegar, and black pepper to taste. Store in refrigerator.



MINI KEY LIME CHEESECAKES

Crust:

¾ cup crushed ginger snaps or graham crackers
3 Tbls. melted butter

Filling:

16 oz. cream cheese, softened
¼ cup sour cream
½ cup granulated sugar
3 Tbsp. key lime juice
1 tsp. lime zest
1 tsp. vanilla
1 large egg

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Blend cookies in a food processor, add butter, then firmly press crumb mixture into a muffin pan. Note - if using silicone muffin pan you do not need a liner. If using a metal muffin tin, use cupcake liners.

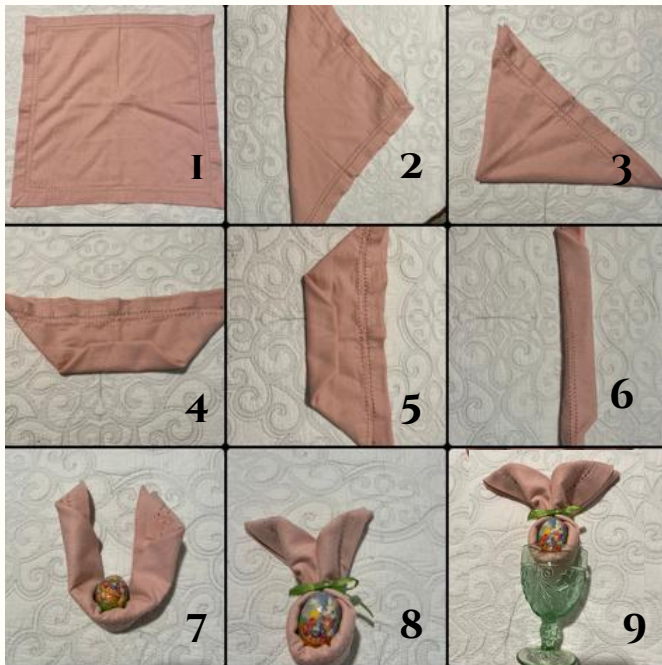
In a mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese until smooth. Add sour cream and sugar, beat until smooth. Add lime juice, zest, and vanilla. Add in the egg, mixing on low. Pour the cheesecake filling evenly into the muffin pan.

Bake at 325 degrees for 15 - 18 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool at room temperature. Cover and chill overnight. Before serving, add whipped cream to the top and/or fresh zest.

Adding food coloring to the cheesecake mixture is a fun way to make these treats seasonal.



Bunny Napkin Folding



1. Lay a square napkin flat and fold in half diagonally.
- 2 - 3. Fold the triangle in half again to make a smaller triangle.
- 4 - 6 At the small end of the triangle, fold down the corner one inch at the time to make a series of folds.
7. Fold the long rolled shape in half and place an egg in the center.
8. Use ribbon to tie the ends together.
9. Place in a glass or on a plate!

Dyeing Easter Eggs Naturally



Red Cabbage =
blue to blue-gray



Beets =
soft pink to rose



Turmeric =
bright golden yellow



Yellow Onion Skins =
golden amber



Parsley =
pale green



Hibiscus Tea =
lavender to purple



Blueberries =
lavender to gray-blue



PREPARATION & STEPS

Boil white eggs to dye.

You will need 1 cup chopped or shredded produce to 2 cups water for cabbage, parsley, onion skins, beets, blueberries, etc. You will need 1-2 tablespoons dried spices or 2 tea bags to 1 cup water for turmeric, passion tea, hibiscus tea, etc.

Bring water to a boil, then add the produce or spices. Boil each color for about 30 minutes. Turn off heat and let cool.

When the dye is cool, strain out the solids and pour the dye bath into bowls or glass jars. Stir in 1 tablespoon white vinegar.

Gently lower boiled eggs into the dye bath. Allow the eggs to soak for 30 minutes or several hours. You can even set the containers in the refrigerator overnight for deeper colors.

When ready, remove eggs from the dye bath and allow to dry on a wire rack. They can be stored in the original egg carton when dry.

EGG DYING TIPS

- Use white-shelled eggs for the most vibrant colors
- White vinegar helps the eggshell absorb the dye.
- Rub the dried, finished eggs with a small amount of vegetable oil or coconut oil for a soft sheen.
- Place leaves, flowers, herbs, or other textures around the egg, secure the items with yarn or stocking before dipping in the dye.
- Use wax crayons to make designs before putting the egg in the dye bath.

GROWTH

MIND, BODY, & SPIRIT

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Historical Development of the Seasons of Lent and Pre-Lent

Bishop Charles Camlin

The earliest records of Church history suggest that those who were preparing for Baptism would undergo a period of fasting, and soon the other members of the Church began to fast with/for them. For instance, The Didache, an early Church manual says: “Before baptism the one who baptizes and the one who is baptized must fast...” (Didache, 7.). Likewise, Justin Martyr writes: “As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them.” (1st Apology, 61.) Compare this with the 4th rubric in the Baptismal Office of the 1928 *BCP* (p. 273), which says of those persons of riper years (adults) that are to be baptized, that sufficient time is to be given “that they may be exhorted to prepare themselves, with Prayers and Fasting, for the receiving of this holy Sacrament.”

At some point, Baptisms were moved to the Easter Vigil and the period of time leading up to that became significant for both catechumens (those being instructed in preparation for Baptism) and baptized Christians to fast and pray. At first, this period varied in length; but soon the forty days prior to Easter became the appointed time for these disciplines. This was more or less standardized in the 4th-5th centuries (“The History of Lent,” Fr. William Saunders).

The number forty has a deep symbolic meaning in Scripture. Remember that God caused rain to fall for 40 days and nights in the days of Noah. He also caused the Israelites to wander in the wilderness for forty years after they refused to obey Him. Moses fasted on Mt. Sinai for forty days and nights when he went up to receive the 10 Commandments. In the Book of Judges, when the Israelites broke His covenant, the LORD handed them over to the Philistines for 40 years. In 1st Kings, the prophet Elijah fasted for 40 days and nights as he went to Mt. Sinai. When the prophet Jonah went to Ninevah, he preached this message—“Yet forty days, and Ninevah shall be overthrown.” And of course, our Lord Jesus was driven into the wilderness following His Baptism to fast for 40 days and nights. All of these passages led the Church Fathers to see the number 40 as symbolic of hardship, affliction, testing, and sometimes, punishment. (cf. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 305.) This imagery comes through in our Hymnody—see especially #95 in *The Book of Common Praise*.

Soon this period was set at 46 days in length (from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday). This was done to exclude Sundays (which are never strict fast days). This meant that the Lenten Season was now set at exactly forty days (making the obvious link to Christ’s temptation in the wilderness). It was called “Lent” because it took place every spring (the Old English word *lencten* referred to the spring season).



This explains the background of Lent, but what about “Pre-Lent?” In view of the discipline that would be undertaken in Lent, the Church deemed that a brief period of preparation was in order. The Latin names of the three Sundays preceding Lent form something of a countdown—Septuagesima is roughly 70 days before Easter, Sexagesima is roughly 60 days, and Quinquagesima is actually 50 days before Easter. As we will see in the lessons, the Church wisely realized that we need to be made ready to undergo such strict training.

The late Rev. Dr. Peter Toon gave a nice summary of Lenten discipline where he wrote: “Fasting can be engaged in various levels of intensity, depending upon health, age and other conditions. Thus it may be appropriate on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday only to drink minimal fluids for the whole day or at least until after dusk or until after the evening service of those days. During the rest of Lent something less rigorous but still demanding would be appropriate. And of course, fasting is to be combined with prayer, meditation upon Scripture and self-examination in the presence of the Lord. Money that is saved by not eating is to be given to the poor and needy.” (“Lent and the “Gesimas,” Mandate, 2002.)

In summary, in the Anglican tradition, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday have been strict fast days, meaning, only liquids until the evening meal—those with infirmities, young children, nursing mothers, and the elderly should refrain from this discipline. The other days of Lent are typically days of abstinence, that is, abstaining from certain types of food—which may include meats, sweets, or some other food/drink that is especially enjoyable to us. The Sundays of Lent are really feast days, on which the disciplines are relaxed. (See the Table on p. li of the 1928 BCP.)

Lessons from The Book of Common Prayer

Septuagesima, the 3rd Sunday before Lent - The Epistle Lesson for the day is from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (9:24-27). In the text, the Apostle likens the Christian life to an athletic competition (running a race or wrestling). In order to complete the race and not to haphazardly throw punches, one must undergo discipline—one must bring his body into subjection. This passage sets the tone for our Lenten discipline. If those who competed in the nearby Isthmian Games were willing to undergo such discipline for a crown of pine branches or dried celery, how much more should we do in order to obtain the incorruptible crown of eternal life.

Sexagesima, the 2nd Sunday before Lent – The Gospel Lesson is St. Luke's account of "The Parable of the Sower." Jesus likens His ministry to a farmer who sows seed. As He explains the image, the seed is the Word of God and the soils represent four different types of people who hear the Word. By saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," He is summarizing the truth of the parable—that the true hearing of God's Word involves not only the ears but the heart. True hearing is measured not only by hearing the Word but also by receiving and keeping it. The result of this type of hearing is to bring forth fruit (see the 5th petition on p. 56 of The Litany in the BCP). As we prepare for an intensified hearing and reading of God's Word during Lent, we are reminded of our need to cultivate our hearts that we might truly hear—and bear fruit.

Quinquagesima, the Sunday next before Lent – In the Gospel Lesson, we hear of Jesus setting "His face like a flint" to go up to Jerusalem where He will give His life on the cross to bear the sins of the world (cf. Isa 50:7). We are being called to make this journey with Him—to be reminded of the awful price of our redemption. The Epistle lesson (I Cor 13) reminds us of the guiding principle of our journey which is charity (love). Jesus taught us that it was love which moved Him to give His life (Jn 15:13) and we too must learn that love is to be the guiding virtue of the Christian life.

Ash Wednesday – In the Collect we pray the words of Psalm 51, that Almighty God would "create and make in us new and contrite hearts"—which is ultimately, the promise of the New Covenant (Jer 31; Heb 10). The emphasis of the lessons is on true repentance—as the prophet Joel says, "rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil." Striking a similar note, our Lord Jesus tells us in the gospel not to fast and pray and give in order to be seen by men, but to be seen by God.



The 1st Sunday in Lent – The gospel lessons for the first three Sundays in Lent have a common theme of Christ encountering and defeating the devil and his demons. This is an important reminder for those who are preparing for Baptism that they must be delivered from the “prince of the power of the air,” and Christ is the only One who can do this. In particular, this Sunday’s gospel recounts Jesus’ fasting and temptation in the wilderness for forty days. In this encounter Christ is recapitulating both Adam’s failure in the Garden (Gen 3) and Israel’s failure in the wilderness temptations. Christ, as the Second Adam, defeats our ancient foe and gives us the paradigm of fasting, prayer and the Word of God as the means by which we might overcome temptation.

The 2nd Sunday in Lent – The gospel tells us the story of Jesus casting the devil out of the daughter of the Canaanite woman. The epistle reminds us that the will of God is our sanctification (the process by which the Holy Spirit works in our lives to make us holy). To bring this about, we must learn to “possess [our] vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence...”

The 3rd Sunday in Lent – Once again, we see Christ in the gospel waging war against the devil and his unclean spirits. Christ warns us that when the house is swept (that is, when the demons are cast out of us), that we need to keep our house “swept and garnished” so that there will be no room for the demons to return. The epistle gives a related image. We who are baptized are now “children of light” and are called to “walk in the light.” This amounts to walking in love rather than fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness, which recalls Jesus’ miracle of feeding five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish. God has “prepared a table in the wilderness” for His people that we might complete our journey. (Ps 78:19)

The 4th Sunday in Lent – This is the mid-Sunday of Lent and the day has acquired several names throughout the centuries. In some quarters, it is known as “Laetare Sunday,” which in Latin means something akin to “Rejoicing Sunday.” This comes from the Introit for the day which begins with the words, “Rejoice ye with Jerusalem and be glad with her, all ye that love her.” (Isa 66:10-11) At other times and places, this fourth Sunday in Lent has been known as “Mothering Sunday,” based upon our Epistle text where the Apostle describes the Church saying, “the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.” (Gal 4:26) But this Sunday is also known as “Refreshment Sunday” because of the gospel lesson for the day.

The 5th Sunday in Lent – This Sunday is commonly called Passion Sunday because the Lenten journey begins to focus on the passion and death of our Savior. The Gospel and Epistle work together to that end. The gospel is taken from St. John 8, where Jesus is in dispute with the Jews. In the course of this discussion, He makes the telling statement, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM.” Judging by their response where they tried to stone Him, it seems pretty clear that they understood that He is clearly identifying Himself with God. This truth sets forth His Person (His divine nature), while the Epistle sets forth His redeeming work on behalf of humanity. In Hebrews 9, Christ is described as both Great High Priest and the Ultimate Sacrifice for the sins of the world. He is “the Mediator of the New Covenant” to the end that we might “receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”

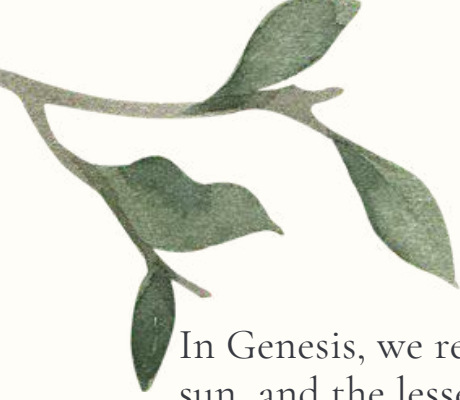
The 6th Sunday in Lent – This Sunday is commonly called Palm Sunday and marks the beginning of the final week of our Lord’s earthly life. It is somewhat strange that the Gospel Lesson does not recount our Lord riding into Jerusalem, but that is because in the ancient liturgy, that text was read prior to the main service with the blessing of the palms. The service of the blessing of the palms was removed from the 1549 *BCP* and only the text on the Passion of Christ was retained. John Henry Blunt laments this because there was an important theological connection. He writes: “This oversight is to be regretted, as there is clearly a connection between the usage of palm-bearing and the Divine ritual, both of Sinai and the New Jerusalem. One of God’s commands to the Jews was, “Ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.” [Lev. 23:40.] And in the Revelation St. John writes, “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” [Rev. 7:9.]” (Blunt, J. H. *The Annotated Book of Common Prayer* 275-6.) Having said that, the connection and ritual is essentially recovered in our parish as we sing *All Glory, Laud and Honor* while waving palms.

Holy Week – The final week of Lent has always had a greater intensity of devotion. In the BCP, the Passion Narratives from all four Gospels are appointed to be read in the Propers during the course of the week. On Maundy Thursday, special emphasis is laid upon both the institution of the Lord’s Supper and upon Christ’s new commandment to “love one another.” Good Friday focuses exclusively upon the cross. In many churches, there are a series of meditations on the Seven Last Words of Christ from the cross (this is outlined by Hymn #III in *The Book of Common Praise*). Easter Even still carries some of the flavor of the earlier Easter Vigil in which new converts were baptized into the Church. This is illustrated by the use of I Peter 3:17-22 as the Epistle Lesson. This text, in its liturgical context, is understood to point both to the Descent of Christ into hell and to Christian Baptism.

As we prepare to enter the Seasons of Pre-Lent and Lent in the coming weeks, I pray that the themes set forth here will help to guide us. Let us pray that the Lord will use all of the services, lessons, and the spiritual disciplines of this period as the means by which we are transformed into the likeness of His Son.







A Lamp to My Feet and A Light to My Path

Katia S. Crabb

In Genesis, we read that God made the two great lights, the greater, the sun, and the lesser, the moon, to rule the day and the night so that the lights may illuminate our world. By the moonlight, we can see things dimly, and when the sun rises, we can see more plainly. We know this from our everyday experience, which is even more apparent in the modern world when we are camping or when the electricity fails. By moonlight, we read a book with difficulty and with the sun more plainly. Our ability to read and comprehend the Scriptures is similar. We can read it under different lights, with the light of grace, from the literal to the spiritual, and with the help of holy teachers.

The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in our understanding of Scripture. The Spirit dispels the darkness in our minds, allowing us to perceive the Scriptures with the eyes of faith. The Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures; as we read in the beginning, the "earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." (Gen. 1:2) The Spirit, whom we acknowledge as the Lord and Giver of Life, who brought light out of darkness, also guides and supports us in our understanding of Scripture.

In our baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit and are illuminated. As Justin Martyr writes in his First Apology, "This baptism is called 'illumination' because of the mental enlightenment that is experienced by those who learn these things. The person receiving this enlightenment is also baptized in the name of Jesus Christ..." Through our baptism, we are new creatures created to partake in the life and light of Christ. As we read, we can focus on Christ, His beauty, and the light that shines within us, guided and supported by the Holy Spirit. Because of our baptism, we can look at all creation with new eyes. Like Moses, who saw the burning bush and whose face shone with a dazzling light after he came down from the mountain where he encountered God, or Peter, James, and John, seeing Christ transfigured and the blinding light of His person and garments. We, too, can see the brilliance of God and His Son in creation and in the Scriptures if we read by faith and with the eyes of our hearts.

One ancient way of reading is to ponder God's word in our hearts. When we slow down and read, we may find a word or sentence that seems new, even though we have read it before, or our hearts start burning within us. This word or phrase has been illuminated to us for a purpose, maybe for reproof, correction, healing, or a more profound knowledge and intimacy with God. We can contemplate the deeper spiritual meanings contained within this word or phrase and lift it in prayer to the Lord. So, we read, ponder, pray, and contemplate God's word.

In the Scriptures, we see the example of seeking someone to help us understand. In the book of Acts, Philip was sent to the Ethiopian Eunuch, who was struggling to understand the Scriptures. We read that "Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:30-31) We, too, can seek out trusted teachers and guides to help us with our scripture reading. Our guides may be a priest or a wise older brother or sister in Christ who is immersed in the prayers and wisdom of the church and who are sustained on the sacraments. The writing of the Fathers of the Church are an excellent place to start.

In our reading of Scripture, we are not left as orphans; God gives us the grace and assistance of His Holy Spirit to shine His light on His word. He also gives us holy fathers and mothers of the faith who are trusted companions in this world and in the world to come. I leave with the second part of the prayer of St. John Chrysostom. "Hide not your commandments from me, but open my eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of Your law. Speak to me the hidden and secret things of Your wisdom."



Around the Table

Melissa McGough



During the Lenten season, we are often reminded of the importance of gathering together, especially around the table. In Scripture, meals are more than just a time to eat; Jesus often used them to build relationships, teach, and share love.

Sharing family meals is especially important for young children. Sitting down together helps children feel a sense of belonging and security, while giving parents the opportunity to model love, patience, and faith in everyday moments. As Scripture reminds us, faith is often passed on through daily life and simple routines (Deuteronomy 6:6–7).

Today, fewer children regularly eat meals with their families, often because of busy schedules or concerns about young children sitting still. Even so, small, consistent efforts can make a big difference. Here are some tips to make this a part of your daily routine.

Start small and realistic: Do not aim for a full 30-minute dinner right away. Begin with just five minutes and gradually increase the time.

Keep a consistent routine: Children thrive on predictability. Eating at the same time each day helps create a rhythm that mirrors the steady presence of God in our lives.

Serve toddler-friendly foods: Include at least one “safe food” your child enjoys. This allows them to explore new foods without frustration, encouraging patience and trust.

Involve children in the moment: Invite conversation, allow them to help prepare the meal, and pray together before eating.

When families gather at the table with intention, they reflect the example of Jesus and minister to their child in a meaningful way.

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Deuteronomy 6:6–7

Oh Be Careful

Oh, be careful little eyes what you see
Oh, be careful little eyes what you see
For the Father up above is looking down in love
So be careful little eyes what you see.

Oh, be careful little ears what you hear
Oh, be careful little ears what you hear
For the Father up above is looking down in love
So be careful little ears what you hear.

Oh, be careful little feet where you go
Oh, be careful little feet where you go
For the Father up above is looking down in love
Oh, be careful little feet where you go.

Oh, be careful little tongue what you say
Oh, be careful little tongue what you say
For the Father up above is looking down in love
Oh, be careful little tongue what you say.

Hymnary.org



Etiquette Trivia

1. How you seat guests at your table has more to do with politics than social etiquette. True or False?

2. Which came first? The spoon or the fork?

3. The oldest book on manners was written in jingles and rhymes during Medieval times in German. True or False?

4. When is it rude to put salt on your food?

5. It is forbidden to take a second helping at a formal dinner today. True or False?

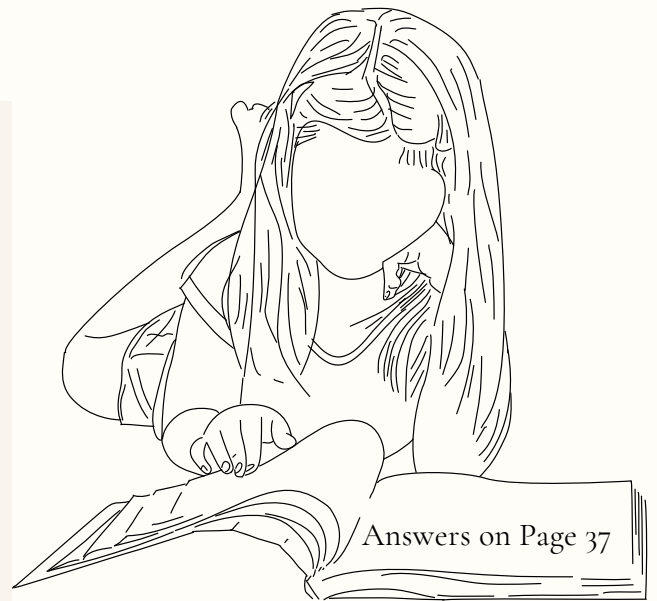
6. Fresh flower arrangements on the table became popular at dinner parties in what century?

7. In the 17th Century, napkin folding was considered an art and profession. Which country exalted the art of napkin folding?

8. It is wrong to blow on your food to cool it off. True or False?

9. The average length of an American dinner is how long?

10. In 1808 dinner was a late meal, and supper was a snack before going to bed. True or False?



11. When you are served a drink at a table, it is acceptable to drink it right away. True or False?

12. Manners change slowly in society. True or False?

13. The early manners books rarely told the reader what the right thing was to do. True or False?

14. The first plates were called "trenchers" and were usually a square piece of bread. In what century did plates become round?

15. It is wrong to put another piece of food on your fork while you are still chewing your previous bite. True or False?

All glory, laud, and honor
to thee, Redeemer King!
To whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.
Thou art the King of Israel,
Thou David's royal son,
who in the Lord's name comest,
the King and Blessed One.



Tips and Tricks for the Home



Neutralize Fridge Odors: Dry leftover coffee grounds, place in a bowl, then add 1-2 tablespoons of salt. This combination contains nitrogen to get rid of odors. Replace every 3 weeks.



Keep Avocados Green: Instead of slicing sideways, cut off the top, scoop out the amount you need, then store upside down to save the rest.



Weigh Your Produce: Did you know a 3lb. bag of onions (lemons, potatoes, etc.) should weigh 3 pounds but often weighs much more? If you want to get more for your money, take the time to weigh your bag. Choose the heaviest one!

Fresh Herbs: Roll them up in damp paper towels and place in baggies with the seals left slightly open.

Fresh Greens: Put paper towels in bags of spinach or salad greens to absorb moisture and keep them crisp.



Garlic: Microwave cloves for 15 seconds for easier peeling.

Lemons/Limes: Roll them between the counter and your hand to maximize juice before cutting.



2 -2 -2 Rule: Freeze leftovers using the 2-2-2 rule: 2 hours on the counter, 2 days in the fridge, 2 months in the freezer.

Faster Defrosting: Place meat on an aluminum sheet tray or skillet. It also works on soups, stews, and anything frozen flat.

Broken Glass: Use a slice of bread to pick up small shards of broken glass.





Essential Cotton Ball: Place a cotton ball soaked in your favorite essential oil in the bottom of your trash can to keep it smelling fresh.



Chalk Stain Stick: Cover a greasy soiled spot on your shirt with chalk. Before washing, rub the spot with laundry detergent or spot remover.

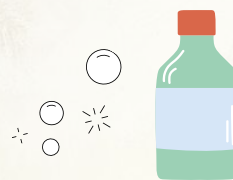
Don't Strain Your Back: Designate a long-handled toilet brush to swish and rub soap scum away after a bath.



Unclog the Shower Head: Soak a cloth in vinegar or pour vinegar into a baggie. Then wrap the cloth or baggie around the shower head & secure with a rubber band. Leave overnight to remove mineral build up.



Tile Stains Be Gone: Hydrogen peroxide bubbles and loosens dirt and stains in tile grout. Spray, let it sit, gently scrub, & rinse.



Shiny Silverware: sprinkle baking soda, salt, and boiling water into an aluminum baking pan. Then soak your silverware to make it shiny. Or add a aluminum foil ball to your silverware basket in the dishwasher.



CLEANING PRODUCTS:

Magic Eraser + Windex: Smudge-free mirrors

LA's Totally Awesome: All purpose concentrated cleaner, degreaser, spot remover. Dollar Tree \$1.25 for 24 oz.

FOLEX Instant Carpet Spot Remover: Powerful stain remover for carpets, upholstery & rugs – Eliminates pet stains, grease, red wine, food, makeup & more

GIVING

O God, who for our redemption didst give thine only begotten Son to the death of the Cross, and by his glorious resurrection hast delivered us from the power of our enemy; Grant us so to die daily from sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through the same thy Son Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Heart for Mission

Kerrie Smith



MINDFUL MISSIONS

Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means. – Luke 8:1 - 3

For 2000 years, women who follow Jesus have had a heart for mission. The above scripture notes a number who literally followed in Christ's footsteps. The Book of Acts mentions several more – Tabitha, Lydia, Phoebe, Priscilla and others – who hosted and supported the Apostle Paul and his fellow missionaries of the early church, as well as labored beside them to spread the gospel.

The women of the Reformed Episcopal Church share and continue this rich heritage of missionary service. From its very beginning in 1873, the REC embraced The Great Commission by partnering with existing missionary groups, such as the Women's Union Missionary Society, by forming its own "Mission Bank," and by supporting foreign missionaries. A Foreign Missionary Committee was proposed by the REC General Council in 1885. By 1891, the Women's Foreign Mission Society (WFMS) of the Reformed Episcopal Church was formed and tasked with the "care and management" of the mission of Mrs. Elizabeth Mercy Bacon in Lalitpur, India, which would go on to include an orphanage, schools, and medical services. When the REC Board of Foreign Missions (BFM) superseded the Committee of Foreign Missions, members of the WFMS served on the Board.

Following the early work centered in India, the REC supported foreign missions in Africa, France and Germany, with many single women working in the mission field as well as wives working alongside their missionary husbands. By the 21st century, REC mission efforts had expanded to include missions in Croatia/Serbia, Cuba/Latin America, additional African countries, and church-planting across Europe and in America.

The women of the REC today are just as engaged as their predecessors in both local and foreign mission fields. They are using their unique abilities, talents and spiritual gifts to spread the gospel, demonstrate the love of Christ, and grow the church around the world. Women throughout the REC are providing material support to missionaries, praying for missions, participating in mission projects, planting churches, and working in every aspect of mission. Learn more about the REC Board of Foreign Missions, their history, missionaries and how to be involved at <https://rec-bfm.org>. To God be the glory!

Dr. Jon Fielder moved with his family to Malawi in 2002 to care for HIV-infected patients. He and his associates started African Mission Healthcare in 2010 to help mission health centers care for the poor, upgrade equipment, and train African health workers. Since it began, African Mission Healthcare has invested more than \$66,000,000 in training, clinical care, and infrastructure projects with more than 47 mission hospital partners in 17 countries. Their efforts have supported direct care for over 1.6 million patients. The “little plastic church” collections are sent to support Dr. Fielder and his family in Kenya.



<https://africanmissionhealthcare.org/>



<https://www.thestorehouseecc.org/>

Providing Easter dinners for local families in need is the goal of our Storehouse/Seven Loaves offering during Lent. The Storehouse Community Center, located on the campus of St. Andrew Methodist Church in Plano, supports families at or below the federal poverty level with programs designed to result in stable, high-quality employment. Their services include a food pantry, clothing closet, education, training and other assistance. Tens of thousands of families are served by The Storehouse each year. Easter dinner is a way to share the love of Christ with these local families.

During the season of Lent, Church of the Holy Communion Cathedral encourages its parishioners to remember mission work as they practice the Lenten disciplines of prayer and almsgiving. Special offerings are collected for three of our mission partners during this time: Dr. Jon Fielder/African Mission Healthcare, The Storehouse Community Center, and RECroo.

RECroo, introduced by Bishop Ray Sutton in 2017, is the vision that “every Reformed Episcopal parish is a strongly established Missional Community as we plant 100 new Reformed Episcopal parishes throughout North America.” Many churches have already been established through RECroo with many more being developed so that everyone everywhere has the opportunity to hear the gospel. Iglesia Holy Communion is one such mission parish. During Lent each adult is asked to make a \$100 offering towards the ministry and mission of RECroo.



*Fr. Jesus Quintero, Iglesia Holy Communion
REC100 mission - Dallas, TX*

<https://www.rec100.org/>



The Nelsons - The Knull Center, Germany



The Gressers - Namibia

PASSION HYMN

St. Augustine Prayer Book

Thirty years among us dwelling,
His appointed time fulfilled,
Born for this he meets his Passion,
For that this he freely willed:
On the Cross the Lamb is lifted,
Where his life-blood shall be spilled.

He endured the nails, the spitting,
Vinegar, and spear, and reed:
From that holy body broken
Blood and water forth proceed:
Earth and stars and sky and ocean
By that flood from stain are freed.

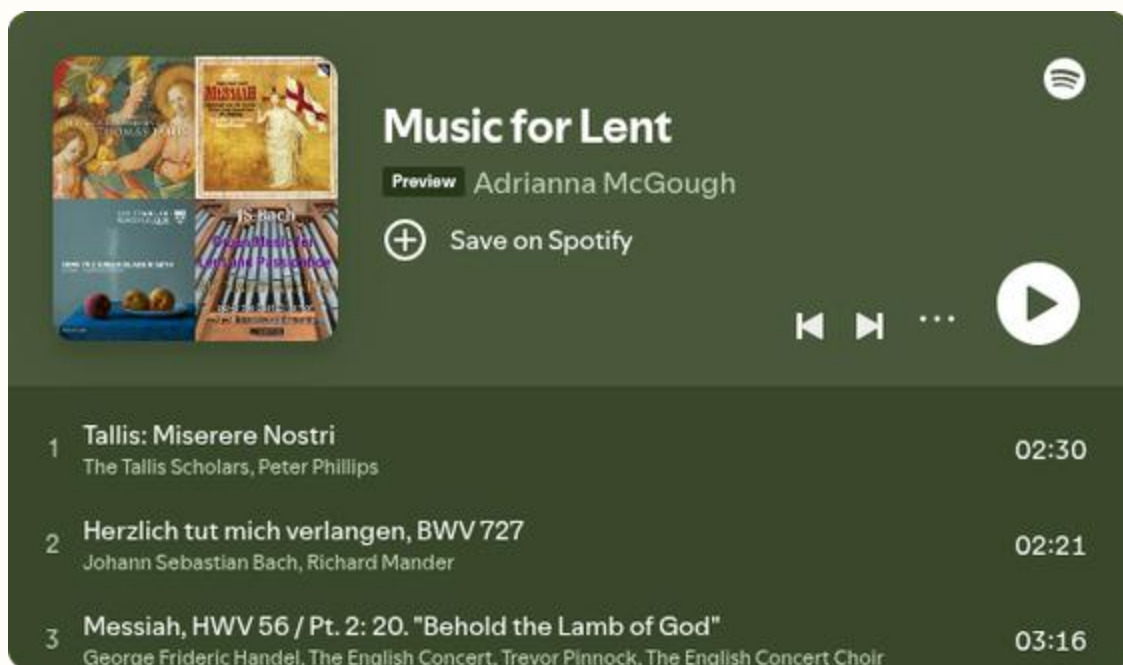
Faithful Cross, above all other
One and only noble Tree;
None in foliage, none in blossom,
None in fruit thy peer may be:
Sweetest wood and sweetest iron!
Sweetest weight is hung on thee.

Bend thy boughs, O Tree of glory,
Thy relaxing sinews bend:
For a while the ancient rigour
That thy birth bestowed, suspend:
And the Kind of heavenly beauty
On thy bosom gently tend.

Thou alone wast counted worthy
This world's ransom to sustain;
That a shipwrecked race forever
Might a port of refuge gain:
With the sacred blood annointed
Of the Lamb for sinners slain.

Music for Lent

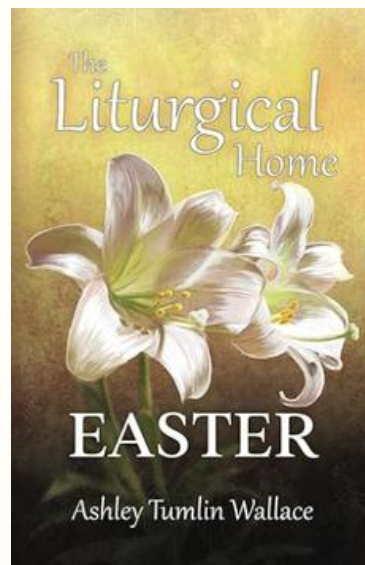
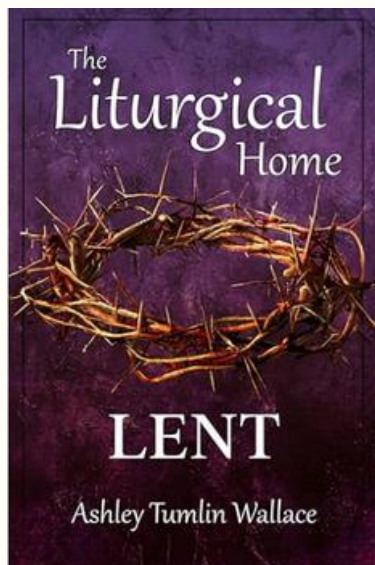
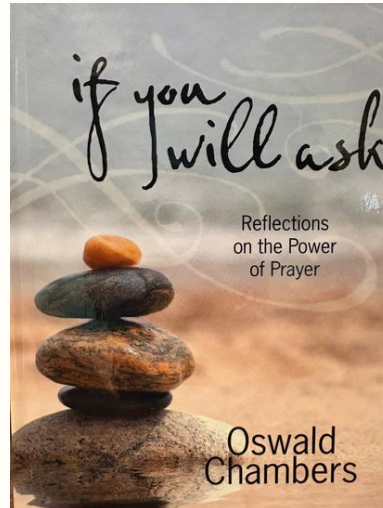
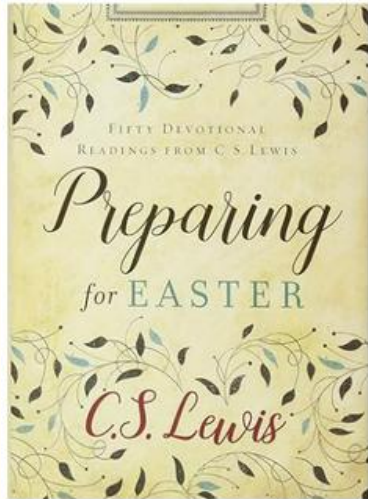
[Click here to open Spotify.](#)



Answers to Etiquette Trivia:

1. True. Round tables prevent anyone from being at the head of the table.
2. The two-prong fork came first in Italy and Spain.
3. False. The oldest book on manners was written in jingles and rhymes in Medieval times in Latin.
4. It is rude to put salt on your food before you have tasted it.
5. True, you should not take a second helping at a formal dinner.
6. Fresh flowers on the dinner table became popular in the 19th century
7. France at Versailles was known for napkin folding.
8. True. You just must wait for your food to cool.
9. The average length of an American dinner is 30 minutes.
10. True, dinner was a late meal and supper was a snack before bed.
11. False. You must wait for everyone to have been served a drink first.
12. True. Manners are not nature but are to be "second" nature.
13. True. They always told you what NOT to do.
14. Round plates became round in the 17th Century.
15. True. It makes you seem gluttonous.

The Next Chapter

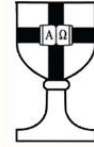


Preparing for Easter: Fifty Devotional Readings from CS Lewis is a collection of readings to ponder through the season of Lent.

If You Will Ask: Reflections on the Power of Prayer, Oswald Chambers

The Liturgical Home is a series of books written by Ashley Tumlin Wallace to help families celebrate the seasons of the church year. Each book includes an introduction to the season, ways to celebrate, and devotions. Available on Amazon

The Silver Chalice



THE SILVER CHALICE
Gift Shop & Bookstore

The Silver Chalice Gift Shop and Bookstore is a volunteer-run ministry of Holy Communion Women (HCW). Located in Lunt Hall, the store offers a unique selection of gifts for all ages, including a variety of Christian books for children and adults, Bibles, the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, and a growing list of Anglican authors.

Proceeds from sales, along with fundraising events hosted by HCW, support a variety of ministries within the church, the diocese, and the community at large. Since 2007, over \$160,000 in monetary and non-monetary contributions has been given out.





Share Your Spiritual Gifts

Seasons of the Spirit will be a quarterly publication to inspire women in the REC and to build community. Every one of us has gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit. If you would like to contribute an article, recipe, photograph, book recommendation, poem, favorite scripture, etc. I ask you to prayerfully consider submitting your ideas. Below are the upcoming themes:



PENTECOST, TRINITYTIDE
(SUMMER, 2026):
HOPE AND PRAISE

Email

hcw@holychurchdallas.org
Attention Julie McGoug

