

# FASTING:

**Invocabit, 2023 A. D.**



**Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church**

**6755 Earl Drive, Suite #100  
Colorado Springs CO 80918**

*A Confessional, Evangelical, Sacramental, and Liturgical Congregation of the  
Lutheran Confessions --  
Where the Lutheran Reformation lives!*

**MEMBER: THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD**

**A GUIDE FOR GOD'S CHILDREN  
AT SHEPHERD OF THE SPRINGS  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**F**ASTING IS AN act of bodily discipline. Regarding preparation for receiving Holy Communion, our Catechism says, "Fasting and bodily preparations are indeed a fine outward training...."

Not eating at the regular time brings an immediate response from the body. When we feel hunger, we remember how frail the flesh is. This reminds us of our weakness, for hunger is but a little taste of death. Confronted with our weakness, we confess our need for a Savior. So fasting is frequently part of repentance.

Perhaps you have never thought of it in this way, but there was fasting in Eden before the fall. In keeping God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree, Adam and Eve fasted from that tree, demonstrating their trust in God by their obedience to Him. Indeed, not eating from that tree was an act of worship!

After the fall into sin, throughout the Old Testament, God's people engaged in fasting. In the Scriptures, fasting is frequently accompanied by prayer as an act of worship and repentance. Consider the declaration of God through the Prophet Joel, read among us every Ash Wednesday:

*"Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation" (Joel 2:15, 16).*

In the New Testament, our Lord Jesus fasted:

*"...and when He had fasted forty days and forty nights..." (St. Matthew 4:2).*

So too did His disciples fast. Jesus says to them:

*"Moreover, when you fast..." (St. Matthew 6:16).*

He does not say "if you fast," but "when you fast." His expectation is that they would fast. So does our Lord say of His disciples:

*"But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast" (St. Matthew 9:15).*

So has the Christian Church observed fasting from the earliest days and throughout the centuries! Fasting is not something that the Church commands in order that men earn favor with God. This would be a gross confusion of Law and Gospel. Our works cannot and will not save us. Salvation comes by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, alone! Christians, however, have always seen fasting as a beneficial exercise of discipline over mind and body, indeed even a God-pleasing act.

Our Lutheran Confessions teach:

*"... repentance ought to bring forth good fruits for the sake of God's glory and command, and good fruits, true fastings, true prayers, true alms, etc., have the commands of God..." (Apology of the Augsburg Confession XII.139).*

Luther, speaking about fasting, said: "It is right to fast frequently in order to subdue and control the body. For when the stomach is full, the body does not serve for preaching, for praying, for studying, or for doing anything else that is good. Under such circumstances, God's Word cannot remain. But one should not fast with a view to meriting something by it as by a good work" (*What Luther Says*, 506).



It is in this spirit, following the words of the Old and New Testaments, the example of Christ and His disciples, the tradition of the Church, and the Confessions of our Church, that we, at Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church, encourage the Christian to fast appropriately and as faith compels. We do not desire to make fasting "legalistic", therefore no guide or "rule" will be published. We only encourage that you, prayerfully, consider your fast and then, prayerfully, glorify God as you fast! May our Lord bless you this Lenten Season!

**Soli Deo Gloria**