

WHY LENT?

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ Jesus, our Lord,



Lent is a deeply contemplative and solemn season in the Lutheran Church. The first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday (February 18, 2026) and is a particularly solemn day when we remember that God created mankind from the dust of the earth and one day we will return to dust; unless, our Lord Jesus should return first. It is good for us to remember this. We are not invincible. Death...is...real!

The Good News is that we have a Savior! His name is Jesus, the One and Only Son of God, the One who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. And so, in many Lutheran congregations, The Sacrament of the Altar is offered immediately after receiving ashes in which we remember that because Christ Jesus died and was resurrected for us, we too will be resurrected and shall inherit eternal life.

Lutherans are often asked why we participate in the season of Lent as many Christian churches do not. The primary argument against this liturgical season is that there is no biblical mandate requiring us to engage in Lenten practices. While this is true, there are many biblical examples that *encourage* us to participate. The best example is Christ's own 40 days in the wilderness, which prepared Him for His ministry, His journey to the cross to save mankind.

Likewise, during Lent, Lutherans also take a 40-day journey (really 46 days, but the six Sundays are not counted). We also take a journey to the cross. We are not sacrificed upon the cross as Jesus was, but we follow Jesus to the foot of the cross and remain with Him there like St. John, Mary, and the others, who faithfully remained with Him as He gave His life for ours. We, too, follow Jesus to the tomb, experiencing the darkness, the stillness, the grief of death. All these things must take place in our hearts, deep in our souls, before we can even begin to appreciate the gift that was truly given to us that first Easter morning. There is no Easter without Good Friday! There is no resurrection for us without our Lord's death on the cross! There is no cross without an intentional Spirit-filled journey!

Jesus took that journey for you and for me. During Lent, we remember that journey. We live that journey so that we may more powerfully live in the truth and joy of our salvation every single day. We embrace that journey so that we more fully embrace the reality of resurrection that awaits all who walk with Christ Jesus!

So, on Ash Wednesday, receive ashes, receive the Body and Blood of your Lord Jesus, and begin a new journey with your fellow saints' in Christ Jesus; a journey that is contemplative, powerful, and emotional, but will ultimately bring you to the empty tomb where we may rejoice and delight in our risen Christ! Then run to tell others the most wonderful words they could ever hear, **"He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!"**

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor ✠✠✠