

# LENT 2019 EXPERIENTIAL CALENDAR

## MARCH

**Introduction**

Lent is a season of *giving up* and *taking up*. We practice giving up something important to refocus our lives on God. By giving up, or fasting, from certain things, we are dying to ourselves. We also intentionally choose to take up things that help us become the kind of people God desires us to be. This calendar suggests daily practices for giving up and taking up during Lent. Lent is forty days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday; Sundays are considered days of "feasting" and rest.

**6** [day 1]

**SILENCE**

Quietly attend the Ash Wednesday service

*This wk read: Luke 1-4*

**7** [day 2]

**CONFESSION**

Confess your intentions for Lent with a close friend

**8** [day 3]

**FASTING**

Fast from all beverages except water

**9** [day 4]

**GENEROSITY**

Buy someone you don't know coffee or a meal without telling them

**10** [feast day]

**REST**

Share a screen-free meal with others

*This wk read: Luke 5-6*

**11** [day 5]

**ENCOURAGEMENT**

Be intentional to use your words to build up others

**12** [day 6]

**PRAYER**

Pray for 3 minutes this prayer, *'Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner'*

**13** [day 7]

**SILENCE**

Don't listen to music or the radio in your car

**14** [day 8]

**CONFESSION**

Share with someone the areas of temptation in your life right now

**15** [day 9]

**FASTING**

Fast from all sweets, candies, and desserts

**16** [day 10]

**GENEROSITY**

Give away 5 items of clothes that you don't wear regularly

**17** [feast day]

**REST**

Take a nap

*This wk read: Luke 7-9*

**18** [day 11]

**ENCOURAGEMENT**

Write a hand-written letter to someone and mail it to them

**19** [day 12]

**PRAYER**

Practice morning and evening prayer to begin and end your day

**20** [day 13]

**SILENCE**

Take a walk for 30 minutes in silence and solitude

**21** [day 14]

**CONFESSION**

Read 1 John 1 and ask God how you should respond

**22** [day 15]

**FASTING**

Fast from all food except fruits and vegetables

**23** [day 16]

**GENEROSITY**

Give to someone in need the money you would have used to eat out with this week

**24** [feast day]

**REST**

Spend six hours today without your phone

*This wk read: Luke 10-12*

**25** [day 17]

**ENCOURAGEMENT**

Don't curse, raise your voice, or use any sarcasm today

**26** [day 18]

**PRAYER**

Choose one person and pray for them 3 times today

**27** [day 19]

**SILENCE**

Practice 20 minutes in meditation before you begin any work today

**28** [day 20]

**CONFESSION**

Be conscious of anyone you are angry with and practice forgiving them

**29** [day 21]

**FASTING**

Fast from eating food in daylight hours

**30** [day 22]

**GENEROSITY**

Serve your coworker, employer, or employees in an unexpected way

**31** [feast day]

**REST**

Refrain from doing any household chores

*This wk read: Luke 13-16*

## APRIL

**1** [day 23]

**ENCOURAGEMENT**

Practice active listening with someone - be fully present with them

**2** [day 24]

**PRAYER**

Pray for every person before you send them an email or text

**3** [day 25]

**SILENCE**

Choose to speak only when absolutely necessary, don't use a lot of words

**4** [day 26]

**CONFESSION**

Share any doubts or despairs with someone you trust

**5** [day 27]

**FASTING**

Eat only one meal of rice and beans; pray for those who are hungry around the world

**6** [day 28]

**GENEROSITY**

Do an act of secret generosity that only you know about

**7** [feast day]

**REST**

Make a meal with family or friends

*This wk read: Luke 17-21*

**8** [day 29]

**ENCOURAGEMENT**

Tell someone you know the character, skills, and abilities you see in them

**9** [day 30]

**PRAYER**

Pray the Lord's prayer (Mt 6:9-13) today at 6 am / 9 am / noon 3 pm / 6 pm / 9 pm

**10** [day 31]

**SILENCE**

End the day in 15 minutes of silence reflecting on where you saw Jesus today

**11** [day 32]

**CONFESSION**

Call or write someone you've had a falling out with to make amends

**12** [day 33]

**FASTING**

Fast from non-work related technology: TV, smart phone, computer, internet

**13** [day 34]

**GENEROSITY**

Take a walk around your neighborhood and pick up any trash you see

**14** [feast day]

**REST**

Do something for two hours that you enjoy

*This wk read: Luke 22-23*

**15** [day 35]

**ENCOURAGEMENT**

Complement 3 people that you do not know

**16** [day 36]

**PRAYER**

Write a prayer to Jesus about your hopes and fears

**17** [day 37]

**SILENCE**

Watch the sunrise and sunset in silence

**18** [day 38]

**CONFESSION**

Read Luke 15 slowly and ask God how you should respond

**19** [day 39]

**FASTING**

Fast from dinner and attend the Good Friday service

**20** [day 40]

**GENEROSITY**

Do something for a neighbor

# WHAT IS LENT?

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are at the heart of the gospel, and Good Friday and Easter Sunday are two of the most significant celebrations of the Christian year. Lent is a season of preparation and repentance during which we anticipate Jesus' sacrifice for us. Just as we carefully prepare for big events in our personal lives—such as a wedding, graduation, or moving to a new city—Lent invites us to make our hearts ready for remembering Jesus' passion and celebrating Jesus' resurrection.

The practice of a forty-day preparation period began in the Christian church during the third and fourth centuries. The number forty is based on the forty years Israel spent in the wilderness and Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness. The forty days of Lent begin on Ash Wednesday (March 6) and continue through holy week (until April 21). These forty days do not include Sundays, which are considered 'feast days' for worship. But the overall focus of the season of Lent is a time of repentance, renewal, and turning to God.

At New Denver Church, we practice Lent together in a few ways. **First**, we invite you to join us for our Ash Wednesday service on March 6 at 7 pm, for Sunday worship at 9 am throughout Lent, and for a special Good Friday service on April 19 at 7:30 pm. **Second**, we suggest you be intentional. Even if the idea of Lent is a strange or new to you, give it a try. Embrace this ancient pathway for drawing near to God. **Third**, consider the idea of giving something up and taking something up during Lent.

## GIVING UP

Historically, Christians have 'given something up' during Lent as a way to focus on their relationship with God. Most things that people give up or fast from are not inherently bad, but any of them can become overly important in our lives. The idea is to abstain from these subtle but powerful influences and refocus our attention on what God wants to teach us. It is an opportunity to forgo these good things that we enjoy in order to identify with Jesus and remember the sacrifice that he made for us. Here are a few suggestions of things you can give up during Lent (just try one):

- + Certain foods such as meat, sweets and desserts, or processed foods
  - + A specific meal each day or going out to eat
- + Certain beverages such as coffee/caffeine, alcohol, or anything other than water
- + Forms of media/entertainment, such as television, movies, Netflix, music, blogs, or news radio
- + Technology that often intrudes into our lives, like social media, texting, smart phones, or the internet
  - + Shopping or purchasing anything that is not necessary
  - + Sports, hobbies, or leisure activities that have become all-consuming
  - + Checking stock tickers, financial accounts, or money-related stresses
- + Destructive habits or addictions like tobacco use, pornography, or gambling

There are plenty of other options. If something crosses your mind and you think, 'but I don't know if I can live without that for forty days!' then you might consider giving it up during Lent.

## TAKING UP

In addition, consider taking up one new activity or practice during Lent. We have provided the Lent Experiential Calendar (other side) with suggested practices each day. Use this as a guide if you don't know where to start. As a community, we are going to take up reading the book of Luke together. We hope you'll consider joining us. The chapters to read each week are provided on the calendar. There are other options you might explore. Pray every morning for 10 minutes. Take daily walks with God. Write a note of encouragement to someone each day. Spend 30 minutes in silence every evening. Take up journaling or meeting with someone regularly to talk about your spiritual journey.

You can't do it all. Don't overwhelm yourself or get caught up in the tasks. And be gracious to yourself; there will be days that you forget or stumble. That's okay. Just pick something to give up and take up during Lent and stick with it. The goal is not perfection or success. Our intention is to make space in our lives to look inward and experience God in a new way during this season.