

# The Carpenter's Helper

*This Week...*

## Bishop's Column

Observing a Holy Lent

## Weekly Parish Schedule

Add your group's event to the calendar: email [stthomassooffice@googlegroups.com](mailto:stthomassooffice@googlegroups.com)

There are many ways to observe the season of LENT

For centuries Christians have set aside the six weeks of Lent to humble ourselves, to simplify our lives, and as is often said these days, to get closer to God. However, it is unfortunate to think we need to get closer to God, because God is as close to us as our next breath. To get closer to God, we need to strip away the clever barriers we build to keep God from getting close to us in the first place.

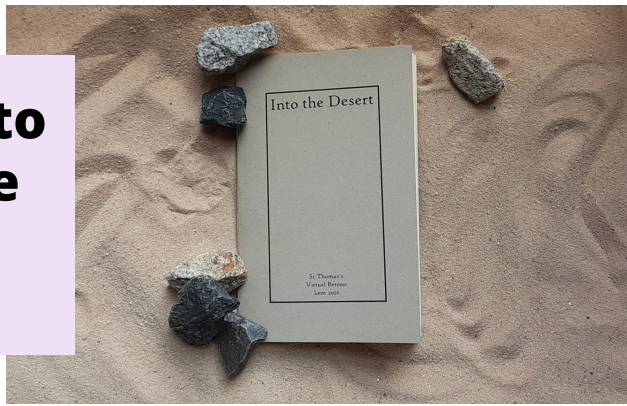
On Ash Wednesday we hear the solemn bidding to observe “a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s Holy Word” (Book of Common Prayer, pg. 265). Each one of these is an invitation to shed the noise and clutter of daily life for a deeper focus on the Holy One. They are spiritual practices that lead us closer to God one step at a time.

I encourage you, my friends in Jesus, to observe a holy Lent. Be intentional in your repentance, prayer, fasting, and self-denial. Give up some habit you have come to take for granted; take on a new practice that stretches you. Plan right now to be in church for Holy Week (April 14 – 20) and Easter (April 21) to witness, as closely as possible, the mysteries at the heart of our faith. Allow these simple, ancient practices to soak into your soul, to challenge your complacencies, and to shake your spirit awake to the nearer presence of God.

Your brother in Christ,+KS Brown



# Many ways to observe the season of Lent



## Attend an Ash Wednesday service

2/26/20 at 7am, noon, and 7pm *ALL Are Welcome!* This can jump-start our commitment to daily repentance during Lent (and throughout the whole year). It can also help increase our gratitude for Christ's sacrifice that conquered death and sin.

## Tread through one of the gospels

Taking time to read through one of the Gospels can help us meditate on Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Mark is a good option because it is concise and the cross (a central Lenten symbol) plays a prominent role in it.

## Work through a Lenten devotional

Fr Howie has created a virtual retreat "Into the Desert". Copies are available for Everyone at the back of the sanctuary.

## Fast from Unnecessary Purchases/Fast from Social Media

Set daily limits: Many of us spend much more money, and time each each day on unnecessary things than we realize. Examples include getting coffee from a coffee shop each day, or spending hours on Facebook. We can be mindful and limit these purchases and social updates and focus on charity instead.

## Fast from Food

When Christians fast from food, the point isn't simply to forgo food. It is to fix our eyes on the Giver of Food instead of the food itself. Fasting helps increase our hunger for God and makes room for Him in our lives. We can choose to observe this in a way that is meaningful for us individually: abstain from eating a particular type of food (such as chocolate or sweets) or fasting from certain meals or on certain days.

## Do 40 Acts of Love

We can choose to engage in some meaningful activity on each day of Lent. Examples include 40 days of praying for our neighbors, 40 days of sending encouragement notes to family members and friends, or 40 hours of volunteering.

## Pray the Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross is a traditional devotional activity that walks us through the events leading up to Christ's crucifixion. Attending the Stations of the Cross at St Thomas can help us meditate on Christ's sacrificial death for us.

# PARISH CALENDAR

Sunday, February 23

*Family Church Sunday*

8:00am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite I  
9:00am (U) Youth Confirmation  
9:15am (P) 6-week series  
History of Christianity  
9:15am (U) Nursery  
10:30am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite II  
11:45am (GH) Coffee, Fellowship  
12:30pm (P) Vestry Meeting  
2:00pm (U) Girl Scout Troop 513  
6:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance

Monday, February 24

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA  
7:30pm (GH) Scottish Dance

Tuesday, February 25

*Shrove Tuesday*

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA  
4:30pm (U) Girl Scout Troop 719  
5:30pm (GH,K) PANCAKE FEAST  
8:00pm (U) KIS AA

Wednesday, February 26

*Ash Wednesday*

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA  
10:30am (C) Lectionary Bible Study  
ASH WEDNESDAY services at  
7am, noon, and 7pm  
8:30pm (GH,K) S College Speakers AA

Thursday, February 27

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA  
3:00pm (C) Blue Hen Bounty  
7:30pm (MR) St Gregory's Choir

Friday, February 28

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA  
12:00pm (P) Al-Anon  
6:30pm (P) Women's AA

Saturday, February 29

10:00am (U) Kindermusik

Sunday, March 1

8:00am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite I  
9:00am (U) Youth Confirmation  
9:15am (P) 6-week series  
History of Christianity  
9:15am (U) Nursery  
9:30am (U) Children's Worship  
10:30am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite II  
11:45am (GH) Coffee, Fellowship  
12:00pm (C) CREW Youth  
12:30pm (P) Vestry Meeting  
2:00pm (U) Girl Scout Troop 513  
6:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance

location key:

(C) Classroom	(MR) Music Room
(GH) Great Hall	(U) Undercroft
(N) Nave	(BO) Business Office
(P) Parlor	(RO) Rector's Office