

40

Journey  
with Jesus

WHEATLAND

United Methodist Church

[Wheatlandumc.org/40](http://Wheatlandumc.org/40)



LENT

# Lent

Lent is a season of forty days (not including Sundays) that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends the day before Easter Sunday. Lent is a time of self-examination and reflection. It's a season for repentance, fasting, and preparation for the coming of Easter.

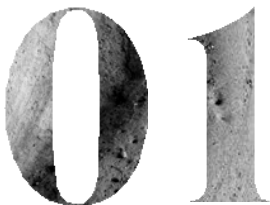
During Lent, we seek to literally “*turn around*” and realign our lives and focus toward God. By doing so, we seek to live and love as more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.





# A different kind of fast

This Lent join us as we participate in the ancient practice of fasting. But instead of fasting from the tangible (like food, entertainment, or music), we'll be fasting from heart conditions. Together, we'll fast from fear, neglect, comparison, materialism, worry, and silence. Use this devotional as a guide to help you as you *"turn around"* and realign your heart toward God.



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A DIFFERENT  
KIND OF F A S T

# Ash Wednesday

Genesis 3:19

*You are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

As we begin the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, we are called to remember our human mortality. While our egos may boast, and we may operate as though we are in control, Ash Wednesday calls us to humility, reminding us that we are not gods.

*How can you humble yourself today  
and acknowledge your own finitude?*





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A DIFFERENT  
KIND OF F A S T

# Thursday

Joel 2:12-13

*Return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;  
rend your hearts and not your clothing.*

Lent is about a rendering of the heart.  
It isn't about giving things up just to give them up.  
It's about ridding yourself of that which keeps you  
from God's abundance.

*What part of your heart needs  
to return to God this Lent?*



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A DIFFERENT  
KIND OF F A S T

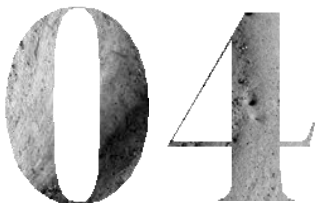
# Friday

Psalm 51:10

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.*

We need God's help to become who we are called to be. The work of transformation is not one we do alone. We call on God to help put within us a new and right spirit.

*What kind of spirit exists within you now?  
Is it one of discouragement or peace?*



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A DIFFERENT  
KIND OF F A S T

# Saturday

Zephaniah 3:17

*The Lord, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you in his love.*

Love possesses more transformational power than anything else. It is God's love for us that renews us, making us into a new creation.

*As you begin your Lenten journey,  
how do you sense God's love for you?*

*One day he got into a boat with his disciples,  
and he said to them, "Let us go across  
to the other side of the lake." So they put out,  
and while they were sailing he fell asleep.  
A windstorm swept down on the lake,  
and the boat was filling with water,  
and they were in danger. They went to him  
and woke him up, shouting, "Master, Master,  
we are perishing!" And he woke up and rebuked  
the wind and the raging waves; they ceased,  
and there was a calm. He said to them,  
"Where is your faith?" They were afraid  
and amazed, and said to one another,  
"Who then is this, that he commands  
even the winds and the water,  
and they obey him?"*

**Luke 8:22-25**

# Fasting from Fear

*“Do not be afraid”* is the most repeated command in the Bible. Yet fear continues to dictate our lives. It keeps us from making decisive action, from pursuing our dreams, and from trusting in God. Fear can paralyze us, destroy our futures, and keep us from growing closer to God and one another. This week, keep in mind that out of chaos, Jesus stills the storm. That while danger encroaches, Christ rebukes the raging waves of our greatest fears showing us that we need not be afraid.



# 05

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FASTING FROM  
FEAR

## Monday

Joshua 1:9

*I hereby command you:  
Be strong and courageous;  
do not be frightened or dismayed,  
for the Lord your God is with you  
wherever you go.*

We are commanded to be strong and courageous, but sometimes that feels impossible. The first step to letting go of your fear is to acknowledge that God is with you wherever you go.

*When in your life have you felt like you were left alone to face your fear? What can you do to actively seek God's presence?*




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FASTING FROM  
FEAR

# Tuesday

Psalm 23:4

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil; for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff— they comfort me.*

Fear can cast an ominous shadow over our daily life if we let it consume our thoughts. Only God can navigate the unknown and steer us through the darkness into the light.

*What makes the experience of facing trials and tribulations different knowing that God is guiding us?*



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FASTING FROM  
FEAR

# Wednesday

Isaiah 43:1

*But now thus says the Lord, he who created you,  
O Jacob, he who formed you,  
O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.*

God knows you and has called you.  
You belong to God, and you always will.

*How does it make you feel knowing that God wants to have an authentic and dynamic relationship with you?*



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FASTING FROM  
FEAR

# Thursday

2 Timothy 1:7

*For God did not give you a spirit of fear,  
but a spirit of power.*

Fear is not of God. When we are afraid, we must remember that our fears are not from God. God, instead, gave us a spirit of power.

*What fears can you transform into power?*






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FASTING FROM  
FEAR

# Friday

John 14:27

*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.  
I do not give to you as the world gives.  
Do not let your hearts be troubled,  
and do not let them be afraid.*

Peace is God's gift to us. It's the opposite of fear. The peace God gives far exceeds any temporary peace that the world offers. It's a lasting peace; one that erases our fears and stills our troubled hearts.

*In what area of your life can you ask for God's peace?*

# 10

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FASTING FROM  
FEAR

## Saturday

Romans 8:38-39

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

What shall we fear if there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God? This is life's greatest assurance: that we are held always by God's love in Jesus Christ.

*How can you cast aside your fear knowing that there is nothing you can do or say that will cause God to desert you?*

He asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 10:29-37

# Fasting from Neglect

We get so busy in this life, so inwardly focused, that we neglect those in need all the time. We behave like the priests and Levites of the world - walking right past our neighbors, too busy or too proud to stop and lend a hand. Jesus tells us that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and to love your neighbor as yourself. This week choose to fast from neglect; decide instead to live like the Samaritan who shows mercy to the one in need.




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FASTING FROM  
NEGLECT

# Monday

Deuteronomy 15:11

*Therefore I command you,  
“Open your hand to the poor and  
needy neighbor in your land.”*

Throughout our scriptures God is persistent in commanding us to care for the poor and the needy. Too often we keep our hands closed, grasping tightly to what we claim is “ours.” Release your grip, and open your hands to share with someone in need.

*What would it look like, practically, for you to reach out to those who are struggling today in our city?*






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FASTING FROM  
NEGLECT

# Tuesday

Matthew 25:40

*And the king will answer them,  
“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one  
of the least of these who are members  
of my family, you did it to me.”*

According to Jesus, every time we care for those on the margins, those who are often neglected, we are caring for Christ himself. Who we consider to be “the least,” Christ considers his family.

*How can you cultivate a mindset which helps you see everyone you meet as part of God's family?*

# 13

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FASTING FROM  
NEGLECT

## Wednesday

Genesis 2:15

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.*

While we consider fasting from neglect, it's important for us to remember that we can neglect more than people. Genesis tells us God put humans in Eden to care for the garden.

*How can you care for creation today?*



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FASTING FROM  
NEGLECT

# Thursday

Galatians 6:2

*Bear one another's burdens,  
and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

It's been said that in love we double each other's joys and halve each other's sorrows. To show love is to multiply the joys of one another and to bear a portion of each other's burdens.

*How can you help shoulder  
someone else's burden today?*



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FASTING FROM  
NEGLECT

# Friday

Proverbs 22:9

*Those who are generous are blessed,  
for they share their bread with the poor.*

Being generous towards others brings blessing to us. As the saying goes, *"It is better to give than it is to receive."*

*How has being generous helped to grow your faith or brought you closer to Christ?*



# 16

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FASTING FROM  
NEGLECT

## Saturday

Luke 12:33-34

*Sell your possessions, and give alms.  
Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out,  
an unfailing treasure in heaven,  
where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.  
For where your treasure is,  
there your heart will be also.*

Consider where your treasure is today. To fast from neglect means to put your heart towards people outside of yourself.

*How can you set your heart in heaven?*

*Now as they went on their way,  
he entered a certain village, where a woman  
named Martha welcomed him into her home.  
She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the  
Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying.  
But Martha was distracted by her many tasks;  
so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not  
care that my sister has left me to do all the work  
by myself? Tell her then to help me."  
But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha,  
you are worried and distracted by many things;  
there is need of only one thing.  
Mary has chosen the better part,  
which will not be taken away from her."*

**Luke 10 : 38 - 42**

# Fasting from Comparison

Comparison robs us of our contentment. Doers, like Martha, seek belonging through their actions and accomplishments.

*“If only I could be as productive as Martha,”* we think as we sit on the floor and watch her scurry around. All the while the Mary’s of the world focus on being present in the moment, not wanting to miss an opportunity when it arises. *“If only I could be as relaxed and present as Mary,”* we think, as we rush around, trying to prove our worth.

Fasting from comparison frees us from wanting what we do not have, and helps us open our eyes to that which we do have.



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F A S T I N G F R O M  
C O M P A R I S O N

# Monday

James 3:16

*For where there is envy and selfish ambition,  
there will also be disorder and wickedness  
of every kind.*

Comparison begets all kinds of disorder.  
We begin to lose sight of our own gifts and  
talents, and eventually forget who we are.

*Who are you comparing yourself to today?  
How can you abandon that comparison?*

# 18

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F A S T I N G F R O M  
C O M P A R I S O N

## Tuesday

Luke 18:10-11

*Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, “God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.”*

“Or even like this\_\_\_\_\_.” You can fill in that blank. Our religious piety can lead to unhealthy comparisons and a “holier than thou” mentality.

*Are you guilty of assuming you are better than other people?*






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F A S T I N G F R O M  
C O M P A R I S O N

# Wednesday

Galatians 6:4-5

*All must test their own work;  
then that work, rather than their neighbor's work,  
will become a cause for pride.  
For all must carry their own loads.*

Determine what is yours to do, and then stop  
comparing it to your neighbor's work.

*What is specifically your work to do?*



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F A S T I N G F R O M  
C O M P A R I S O N

# Thursday

Genesis 4:3-5

*In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.*

Cain was a farmer, while Abel was a herder. When Cain compared his gift to that of his brother's, he became angry and killed his brother.

*How does comparison lead to violence or other vices in your life?*




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F A S T I N G FROM  
C O M P A R I S O N

# Friday

Isaiah 45:9

*Woe to you who strive with your Maker,  
earthen vessels with the potter!  
Does the clay say to the one who fashions it,  
“What are you making?” or  
“Your work has no handles?”*

When it comes to comparison there is more than just me and you, or us vs. them, there is also criticism and critique of that which God has created and called good. God is the potter, and everyone else is the clay.

*How can seeing everybody as God's creation combat comparison in your daily life?*




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F A S T I N G FROM  
C O M P A R I S O N

# Saturday

Psalm 23:1

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*

Theodore Roosevelt said, “Comparison is the thief of joy.” When you compare, you seek to gain approval, value, and joy from other sheep, rather than God, the Divine Shepherd.

*How will you make fasting from comparison  
a regular practice so you can live a life of joy,  
a life where you shall not want?*



*And he said to them, "Take care!  
Be on your guard against all kinds of greed;  
for one's life does not consist in the abundance  
of possessions." Then he told them a parable:  
"The land of a rich man produced abundantly.  
And he thought to himself, 'What should I do,  
for I have no place to store my crops?'  
Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down  
my barns and build larger ones,  
and there I will store all my grain and my goods.  
And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample  
goods laid up for many years;  
relax, eat, drink, be merry.'  
But God said to him, 'You fool!  
This very night your life is being demanded  
of you. And the things you have prepared,  
whose will they be?' So it is with those who  
store up treasures for themselves  
but are not rich toward God."*

*Luke 12:15-21*

# Fasting from Materialism

We live in a culture of materialism. We are constantly consuming more things - having to buy and build bigger barns to store all of our goods. We have a tendency to consider possessions as more important than spiritual values. This week think about giving up your own propensity to consume and hoard things. Maybe even get rid of some things you don't need.



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F A S T I N G FROM  
M A T E R I A L I S M

# Monday

1 Timothy 6:7

*For we brought nothing into the world,  
so that we can take nothing out of it.*

We often think of our possessions and our money as belonging to us. In reality, nothing belongs to us. We brought nothing into the world, and when we leave this world nothing we acquired will come with us.

*How can you loosen your grip on your own possessions?*



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F A S T I N G F R O M  
M A T E R I A L I S M

# Tuesday

Ecclesiastes 5:10

*Whoever loves money never has enough;  
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied  
with their income.*

The more we have the more we realize our own  
dissatisfaction. Money and wealth never satisfy.

*What is your relationship to money?  
Do you ever feel you have enough?*



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F A S T I N G F R O M  
M A T E R I A L I S M

# Wednesday

Proverbs 16:16

*How much better to get wisdom than gold!  
To get understanding is to be chosen  
rather than silver.*

Wisdom and understanding are more valuable than material possessions. They should be sought after with more energy than wealth.

*How are you seeking wisdom and understanding?*





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F A S T I N G F R O M  
M A T E R I A L I S M

# Thursday

2 Corinthians 4:18

*Because we look not at what can be seen  
but at what cannot be seen;  
for what can be seen is temporary,  
but what cannot be seen is eternal.*

As Christians, we are to keep our eyes fixed on the eternal things which we cannot see. We can't see love, hope, and kindness the way we can see material things, but we believe in them more than anything else.

*What are the eternal things  
you need to fix your eyes upon?*



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F A S T I N G F R O M  
M A T E R I A L I S M

# Friday

Luke 12:15

*And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”*

Materialism is like quicksand. Once we have some, we always want more. Greed is a vice that we must protect ourselves from.

*How are you guarding your heart against greed?*



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F A S T I N G F R O M  
M A T E R I A L I S M

# Saturday

Hebrews 13:5

*Keep your lives free from the love of money,  
and be content with what you have; for he has  
said, "I will never leave you or forsake you."*

Our desire for more material and wealth is rooted  
in insecurity. But we need not be insecure or afraid.  
The antidote to materialism is the realization that  
Christ is always with us.

*Where do you sense Christ in your life right now?*

*He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you,  
do not worry about your life, what you will eat,  
or about your body, what you will wear.*

*For life is more than food, and the body  
more than clothing. Consider the ravens:  
they neither sow nor reap, they have neither  
storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them.  
Of how much more value are you than the birds!  
And can any of you by worrying add a single  
hour to your span of life? If then you are not able  
to do so small a thing as that,  
why do you worry about the rest?*

**Luke 12:22-26**

# Fasting from Worry

*“Worrying is like a rocking chair, it gives you something to do, but it gets you nowhere.”*

We spend a lot of time and exert a lot of energy worrying, yet in the end it gets us nowhere. This week you are invited to fast from worrying. This may be easier said than done, so you may need to embrace a practice to help you fast. As you read your devotion each day, accompany it with an action, a practice that does take you somewhere. Take a walk, make a list, write three things you are grateful for. Rather than exerting energy worrying, exert your energy on things that will actually take you somewhere.



# 29

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FASTING FROM  
WORRY

## Monday

Philippians 4:6

*Do not worry about anything,  
but in everything by prayer and supplication  
with thanksgiving let your requests  
be made known to God.*

Talking aloud about what troubles you can help release the power it has over you. Prayer is a form of release from worry.

*What troubles are you willing to share with God?*



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FASTING FROM  
WORRY

# Tuesday

John 14:27

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.  
I do not give to you as the world gives.  
Do not let your hearts be troubled,  
and do not let them be afraid.*

God doesn't promise that we'll have a life free of fear and trouble, but God does promise that God will be with us to help carry the load.

*Has anxiety distracted you from living a joyful life? How can you use your anxiety to draw closer to God?*

# 31

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FASTING FROM  
WORRY

## Wednesday

Matthew 11:28

*Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest.*

God cares deeply about your pain. God wants always to lighten your load and give you rest.

*How have you experienced God as a friend?*



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FASTING FROM  
WORRY

# Thursday

Psalm 94:19

*When the cares of my heart are many,  
your consolations cheer my soul.*

Leave your worries, burdens and doubts at the feet of Jesus, so you can be free to live a full and meaningful life in Christ.

*What does a full and meaningful life in Christ look like for you?*





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FASTING FROM  
WORRY

# Friday

Matthew 6:34

*Therefore, stop worrying about tomorrow,  
because tomorrow will worry about itself.  
Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

When we are constantly worried about tomorrow,  
we are unable to see the gifts of today. Being present  
in the moment is one of life's most difficult tasks.

*When did you waste time worrying about something that never materialized?*

## 34

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FASTING FROM  
WORRY

# Saturday

1 Peter 5:6-7

*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.*

To live in a state of worry is to reject Christ's promise of acceptance, security, and love.

*How can you replace anxiety with trust?*

*Then they brought it to Jesus;  
and after throwing their cloaks on the colt,  
they set Jesus on it. As he rode along,  
people kept spreading their cloaks on the road.  
As he was now approaching the path down from  
the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the  
disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud  
voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen,  
saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the  
name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in  
the highest heaven!" Some of the Pharisees in the  
crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your  
disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you,  
if these were silent, the stones would shout out."*

**Luke 8:22-25**

# Fasting from Silence

St Francis of Assisi is quoted saying, *“Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary use words.”* Francis emphasized the importance of our actions to *“speak”* the Gospel, but not at the expense of using our voices as well. There are times when it is necessary to use words. This week you have the opportunity to fast from silence and use your voice to speak the Gospel, to advocate for those on the margins of society, to join the stones in shouting praises for the love of God made known in the life of Jesus Christ.

# 35

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FASTING FROM  
SILENCE

## Monday

Psalm 96:2-3

*Sing to the Lord, bless his name;  
tell of his salvation day to day.  
Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvelous works among all the peoples.*

The Psalms are full of calls to be vocal about who God is and to share the glory of God around the world.

*When did you last share the glory of the Lord?*





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FASTING FROM  
SILENCE

# Tuesday

Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

The Holy Spirit has charged us to be witnesses throughout the world, testifying to God's love in Christ Jesus.

*How can you participate in this witness to the world?*



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FASTING FROM  
SILENCE

# Wednesday

2 Timothy 1:7-8

*For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord.*

The Spirit God gives us is meant to push us forward, out of our comfort zones.

*How can you step out of your comfort zone today, leaning on the Holy Spirit to help you share the message of Christ?*



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FASTING FROM  
SILENCE

# Maundy Thursday

Romans 1:16

*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel;  
it is the power of God for salvation  
to everyone who has faith,  
to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

As Christians we are not to be ashamed of the Gospel. We should be proud of our faith in Jesus Christ and eager to share.

*How can you become more unashamed about your faith?*



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FASTING FROM  
SILENCE

# Good Friday

John 20:21

*Jesussaidtothemagain, "Peace be with you.  
As the Father has sent me, so I send you."*

The Gospel tells many stories about how God empowers Jesus to do the work he was sent to do. Here, Jesus empowers us in the same way.

*How can you lean into that empowerment and be sent by Christ?*





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FASTING FROM  
SILENCE


# Holy Saturday

Isaiah 6:8

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,  
'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'  
And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'"*

Today, on this final day of Lent, we prepare ourselves for the resurrection of Christ. We remember that Christ inaugurated a new kind of kingdom in this world, and it is up to us to continue the work of establishing it here as it is in heaven.

*How can you continue the work of Christ?*



*They found the stone  
rolled away from the tomb,  
but when they went in,  
they did not find the body.*

Luke 24:2-3

