

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
NORFOLK, VA

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FASTING DURING LENT

A LUTHERAN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

By Deacon Kelly Toton

Fasting during Lent holds profound significance for Lutheran Christians, serving as a spiritual discipline deeply rooted in the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the church. Lent, a period of forty days leading up to Easter, is a time of reflection, repentance, and preparation for the celebration of Jesus Christ's resurrection. Fasting during this season is not merely a ritualistic observance but a profound expression of faith, obedience, and devotion to God. Understanding the importance of fasting during Lent sheds light on its transformative power in deepening one's spiritual journey and strengthening one's relationship with God.

Central to the Lutheran Christian faith is the recognition of Christ's sacrifice on the cross for the redemption of humanity. During Lent, believers are called to emulate Christ's self-denial and sacrifice by abstaining from certain foods, luxuries, or activities. This act of fasting is a tangible expression of humility and reverence, acknowledging one's dependence on God and the need for spiritual renewal. As Jesus

INSPIRING READS IN THIS ISSUE:

FASTING DURING LENT

LEARNING TO LIVE
WITH GOD

LWML UPDATES

LWML SPRING RALLY

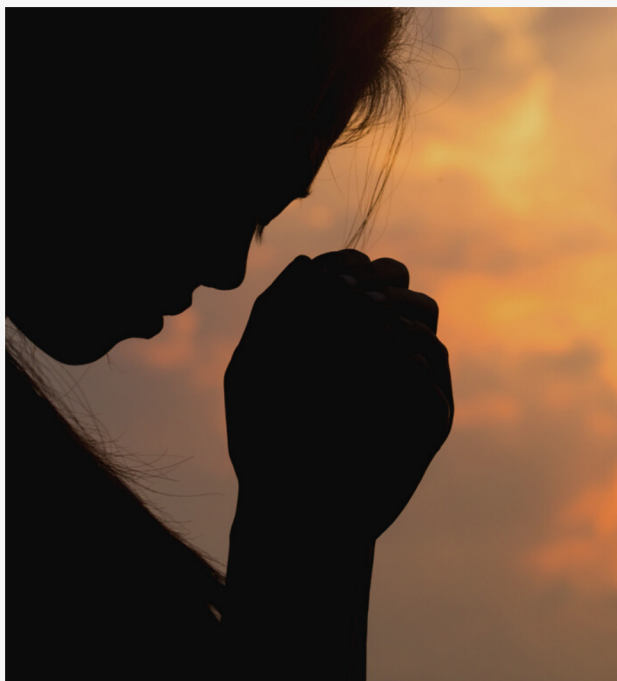
CHURCH SERVICES

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FASTING DURING LENT, CONT.

Himself proclaimed in Matthew 4:4, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God," emphasizing the spiritual sustenance derived from fasting and devotion to God.

Moreover, fasting during Lent is a means of spiritual purification and renewal. In the Lutheran tradition, Lent is a time for self-examination, repentance, and reconciliation with God. By abstaining from worldly indulgences, believers seek to purify their hearts and minds, turning away from sin and drawing closer to God's grace. As articulated in Joel 2:12-13, "Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." This passage underscores the importance of sincere repentance and inward transformation through fasting.

Furthermore, fasting during Lent fosters a deeper sense of solidarity and compassion within the Christian community. As believers join together in the observance of Lent, they share in the collective journey of faith, supporting and encouraging one another in their spiritual endeavors. The act of fasting together creates bonds of empathy and understanding, as believers unite in prayer,



*Return to me
with all your heart, with
Fasting with weeping, and
with mourning;
and rend your Hearts
and not your garments.*

reflection, and worship. As mentioned in Matthew 6:16-18, "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others...But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret." This passage emphasizes the sincerity and humility of fasting, highlighting the importance of inward devotion rather than outward display.

Importantly, fasting during Lent is a symbolic journey of preparation and anticipation for the celebration of Easter. As believers deny themselves during this season, they are reminded of Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the cross and the hope of His resurrection. Through fasting, believers participate in the Paschal mystery, experiencing a spiritual death to sin and a rebirth into new life with Christ. As Paul writes in Romans 6:4, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

In conclusion, fasting during Lent holds profound significance for Lutheran Christians, serving as a transformative spiritual discipline that deepens their relationship with God and strengthens their faith. By emulating Christ's sacrifice, believers engage in a journey of self-denial, repentance, and renewal, preparing their hearts to celebrate the joy of Easter. Through fasting, believers draw closer to God's grace, experiencing spiritual growth and transformation in their lives. As they embrace the discipline of fasting during Lent, Lutheran Christians are reminded of the enduring hope of Christ's resurrection and the promise of new life in Him.

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH GOD:
Bible, Prayer, & Action



Hear from Dr. Kari Vo at presentations at **King of Glory Lutheran** on Saturday, March 16 and Sunday, March 17, 2024.

Saturday: Join us for a morning with Kari—learning about her life, how she writes the Devotions, and spend some time in conversation based on her devotions.

*Registration \$12 at the door · Lunch included
Please respond by March 11 to Cathy Reck
mothrama@aol.com or 757-412-9856*

Sunday Bible Study: Kari will present two sessions on **“Learning to Live with God: Bible, Prayer, & Action”**.

SATURDAY,
MARCH 16, 2024
9:00am-1:30pm

SUNDAY,
MARCH 17, 2024
9:30am & 10:45am

Dr. Kari Vo has served since 2016 as the theological writer for Lutheran Hour Ministries. She writes many of the Daily Devotions as well as working on other projects such as Bible studies and booklets.



Dr. Kari Vo



KING of GLORY

4897 Longhill Rd,
Williamsburg, VA 23188



LWML

Lutheran Women *in Mission*

THANK YOU!

We want to thank everyone who supports us in our fundraising efforts. All of the monies we make go to supporting the further education of church workers. We try to give \$500 to a Seminary Student and \$500 to a Lay Deaconess student.

We have been blessed that each year we can meet our goal through your generous giving. Thanks be to God that we can be a blessing to others.



APRIL 14 - BAKE SALE

Calling all bakers! We will have a bake sale in the Narthex on April 14. Show off those skills, dust off your favorite recipes, or try new ones we can be the guinea pigs!

All treats will be available for a donation before and after service.

APRIL 21 - LWML LUNCH

Directly after church on the 21st we will have a small luncheon to fellowship. While we are gathered together, we will discuss where we are concerning our missions, and make plans for the next quarter.

All the ladies are invited to join us! Please bring something light to share. Your husbands and children are welcome to join us for lunch! a

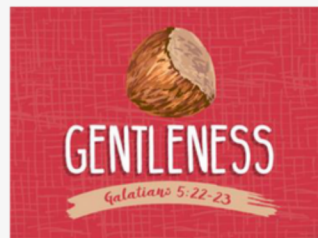
LWML Tidewater Zone Annual Spring Rally



"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Galatians 5:22-23 ESV

April 13th 9am to 2pm

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
424 Kings Grant Rd
Virginia Beach, VA 23452



\$5 Registration Fee collected at the door

Registration opens at 8:40 - Please bring cash.



Connect With A Wish: a Virginia Beach based, 501c3 nonprofit providing children in local foster care with resources and support to live well and grow.

Ingathering items will fill their *Handle With Care Bags* which are overnight essential comfort items.

Needed items are: chapstick, full size body lotion, boys new underwear (all sizes), night lights and flashlights.

RSVP to Kathryn Wacker, Tidewater Zone VP for Human Care by April 7th

Decorating: **Prince of Peace**

Registration Table: **Resurrection**

Table Prayer: **Trinity**

Breakfast, tableware & drinks: **Prince of Peace**

EACH GROUP should bring enough sandwiches or a salad (i.e. pasta salad, fruit salad, pea salad, tuna/chicken salad, Cesar salad, potato salad) for their group plus 4 and a desert to share.



Maundy Thursday

MARCH 28 - 6:45 PM

The whole salvation story, woven throughout the pages of sacred Scripture, leads to a feast. As we gather for worship this Thursday of Holy Week, we experience the same: everything leads us to a feast. Who are the ones welcomed to this feast? Only those who are poor, crippled, blind, and lame are invited (Luke 14:21). Only the bankrupt are welcome here. Only those who know they can never repay the Host of this Meal for His loving kindness are welcome to sit at His Table. "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15). How blessed we are to eat His bread and drink from His cup together this day! For in the sacred feast our nail-scarred Host has prepared, we who lack so much are given everything we could possibly need.

Good Friday

MARCH 29 - 6:45 PM

On the day the sun stopped shining (Luke 23:45), Jesus Christ offered His life in our place upon the cross. The darkness of our sinful souls was placed upon the sinless Son of God. Ridden with the sins of the whole world, Jesus exchanged places with us. He died our death so that we may know His life. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He cried "Eloi!" so that we could cry "Abba!" He was forsaken so that we can be embraced in the Father's love. As we come to the cross during our Good Friday service, may we be filled with the riches of grace, shown to us by the One who would go to any lengths to make us His own and give us real life for all eternity.

Easter Breakfast

MARCH 31ST - 8:30 AM

Join us for our annual Easter morning breakfast!

We gather together before the worship service to celebrate Christ's resurrection. A sign-up sheet on the bulletin board lets us know what you plan to bring.



There will also be a small egg hunt for our kids!



E A S T E R

HE IS
NOT HERE.
FOR HE
HAS BEEN
RAISED AS
HE SAID

M A T T H E W 28:5