

An explanation on the origins, practices and history of the Lenten season from Wikimedia Commons:

Every year, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. During this time, observers practice fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. This is meant to imitate Jesus Christ's actions and reflect on his life, death and resurrection.

Who Practices Lent?

Lent is most commonly observed by the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican denominations. The Eastern Orthodox churches also observe Lent, but during the 40 days before Palm Sunday with fasting continuing during Holy Week until Orthodox Easter on April 5th.

How Is Lent Observed?

Lent was first practiced in the fourth century as a period of self-examination and self-denial to prepare for Easter. The Lenten season is also seen as a time to give up something pleasurable – which could be anything from chocolate to habits like swearing or procrastinating.

Why Is Lent 40 Days Long?

The 40 days of Lent, or Quadragesima as it is known in Latin, stems from two biblical stories. The first is the Old Testament story of the Israelites wandering in the desert for 40 years. The second is the New Testament story of Christ's 40 days spent in the wilderness when he was tempted by Satan.

While the period of Lent is 40 days, depending on the year there can be as many as 46 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter. The reason derives from practices during the early Christian church. Christ's disciples, as Jews, used to observe the Sabbath on Saturday – the seventh day of the week. But since Christ rose from the dead on Sunday – the first day of the week – early Christians marked the resurrection as a new creation, thereby transferring the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday.

Since all Sundays are considered holy days to commemorate Christ's resurrection, the early church forbade fasting, kneeling and acts of sorrow on Sundays. This meant only 34 out of the 40 days before Easter were for fasting. In the fifth century, Christians wanted 40 full days of penance before Easter. To do that, they added Good Friday and Holy Saturday – to make 36 days. Within the next few centuries, Ash Wednesday was added. This included the Thursday, Friday and Saturday following, bringing the total fasting days to 40. Lent is a moveable season, meaning that it occurs on different dates each year.

What Is Ash Wednesday?

During services, Pastors place a cross of ashes on a worshipper's forehead. This is meant to serve as a reminder of human mortality, repentance and a way to prepare for Holy Week and Easter.

"The ashes are made from the palms from the prior Palm Sunday," Peter Barrett, parish administrator for St. Olaf's Catholic Church in downtown Minneapolis, told CBS News. The Catholic Church is not the only denomination to observe Ash Wednesday. Historically, the Anglican, Lutheran and Methodist churches also have practiced the ritual.

How Is Lent Related To Mardi Gras And Other World Carnivals?

Pre-Lenten festivals like Mardi Gras and other famous Carnivals held in Trinidad & Tobago, Venice and Rio de Janeiro are associated with celebrating before the season of fasting begins.

Carnivals were first celebrated in ancient Rome as pagan festivals to celebrate the onset of Spring. Later, the Roman Catholic Church modified the festival into a celebration preceding Lent. This notion was spread to European colonies in the New World.



Gonzalez United Methodist Church

February 18, 2015



Sunday Worship Services:

**Traditional in Sanctuary
8:15 and 11:00 AM**

**Contemporary Worship
In Community Life Center
9:45 AM**

2026 PAULINE ST – CANTONMENT, FL 32533

PHONE: (850) 968 - 6006

www.gonzalezmethodist.org

“Making Disciples for Jesus Christ”

Ash Wednesday Service February 18, 2015 6:30 PM

(Distribution of Paper and Pencils Before Service)

Pastor: Rev. Michael Ramsey
Music Director: Richard Jernigan
Pianist: John Ford

PLEASE REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE IN THE BLACK FOLDERS

Prelude John Ford

Invocation Rev. Michael Ramsey

*Opening Hymn # 269 “Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days”

*Collect Prayer #353 “Ash Wednesday”

The Meaning of Ash Wednesday

The Meaning of Lent

Lenten Offering

*Doxology

Reflecting Over the Lenten Season

Anthem “Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God” Chancel Choir

Scripture Reading 2 Corinthians 5:20 - 6:10

Devotion "A Broken Spirit, a Contrite Heart" Rev. Michael Ramsey

Invitation To The Observance of Lenten Discipline

Thanksgiving Over the Ashes

*Imposition of Ashes, Silent Confession, and Pardon

Celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion

A Service of Word and Table II

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*Closing Prayer #268

“Lent”

*Closing Hymn # 301

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”

*Benediction

Rev. Michael Ramsey

Postlude

John Ford

*The Congregation is invited to stand if able.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Paper and Pencils will be distributed to you for your reflection time. Please write down what you will fast (give up) and what spiritual disciplines you will add to your life during Lent. The paper is for you to keep, as you will be the only one seeing it.

Please return pencils to the Narthex. Thank you.

After the Imposition of Ashes, we will Celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion by Intinction.

This special **Lenten Offering** will be used to help our neighbors needing assistance through our Agape Ministry. Thank you for your support!

The Risk Young Adult Group is sponsoring a **Bake Sale** this Sunday the 22nd at 9:15 AM. Proceeds to benefit Relay for Life.

The **Church Council meeting** is scheduled for Monday, February 23rd at 6:30 PM in the CLC.

A **Nursery** is available for all three Sunday services at 8:15, 9:45, and 11:00 AM for children Birth-Three and on Wednesday nights from 6 to 7:30 PM.

A **Restroom** is located in the Church Office and in the CLC.