

Lenten Discipline 2019
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Pemberville, Ohio
www.bethlehempemberville.org

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (March 6) and concludes on Holy Saturday (April 20).

We invite you to take some time this week to develop and write down your Lenten discipline.

- If we consider our Lenten discipline carefully, we're more likely to take it seriously.
- And if we write it down, it has an added degree of permanence.
- It's best if you can be as specific as possible.

A. General Guidelines:

1. As we discussed on Sunday, one of the points of the discipline of Lent is cultivating deeper practices of **listening to Jesus**. If your practice is helping you listen to Jesus, keep it up; if it's not, modify it or choose a new one.
2. You want your discipline to **stretch** you to grow in your faith, but you don't want your discipline to be so ambitious that you give up right away.
3. **Choose one thing**. If you're an overachiever, it's tempting to do more than one thing, but you're better off doing one thing well than doing three things poorly.

B. The Tradition of Lent:

1. Traditionally, the discipline of Lent included such things as **prayer, fasting** (giving something up, abstaining from certain foods) and **almsgiving** (gifts to the poor, sometimes also referred to as "works of mercy").
2. To these traditional practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, I would add **reading and reflecting on Scripture**, since 2019 is a Year of Scripture for our congregation and the Northwestern Ohio Synod.

C. Some Ideas, by Category:

On the next page are some suggestions for your Lenten discipline. *Feel free to use, amplify or simplify any of the ideas in this list. It's just a place to get started.*

When you're ready, write out your discipline in the box below and keep it with you during the next 40 days.

My Lenten Discipline

Prayer

- Learn a new prayer form (centering prayer, Ignatian contemplation, etc.)
- Dedicate a certain time of day for prayer and include list of those you'll pray for
- Make a list of those you need to forgive and begin praying the list
- Set an alarm or alert on your phone to remind you to pray at certain times during the day
- Visit a prayer labyrinth
- Practice praying in silence for ____ minutes each day
- Begin a prayer journal

Fasting

- Take social media apps off your phone
- Give up social media entirely
- Give up grudges, criticism or snark (or all three!)
- Substitute walking or biking for driving whenever possible
- Give up some of your favorite foods and learn what foods are available in impoverished nations
- Give up going out to eat and give the money to the poor through organizations such as ELCA World Hunger or Missions International of America
- Give up a particular indulgence (coffee, desserts, etc.) and give the money you would have spent on these things to the poor

Almsgiving / Works of Mercy

- Volunteer for an hour each week at our community food pantry
- Volunteer at a homeless shelter
- Find out how much in food stamps a family of your size would receive for a week and try to eat using only that amount of money
- Learn more about poverty in your community and share those findings with others
- Do your own research on world hunger and take one concrete step to feeding the hungry
- Cook a meal for someone in need

Scripture

- Choose a number of Scripture verses to memorize
- Read a book on the Bible
- Read a commentary on a book of the Bible
- Commit to reading Scripture out loud with your spouse, children or friend
- Add an additional time of Bible reading to your day / week
- Memorize a whole chapter of the Bible

It is my prayer that your Lenten discipline will help us all **listen more deeply and carefully to Jesus.**

+Pastor Matt Musteric
March 4, 2019