



Lent is the season in which the whole church enters into an extended retreat. Just as Jesus went into the desert for forty days and forty nights, we, too enter a forty-day period when we encounter God. We make this journey renewing our baptismal vows, answering our call to be Christ's disciples in the world.

- Our Lenten journey begins on Ash Wednesday, with Matthew's Gospel calling us to prayer, fasting and almsgiving.
- The first Sunday of Lent, Jesus is in the desert and is faced with the same temptations that we continue to face today.
- As the journey continues, we are challenged by the story of the transfiguration as Jesus reveals to the disciples who he really is.
- Along the way, we familiar stories of the fig tree, the prodigal son and the woman caught in adultery, that remind us of our journey toward reconciliation with God, ourselves and each other.
- Lent comes to a close on Holy Thursday as we commemorate the institution of the Eucharist and Jesus' command to love and serve each other. We are challenged to be the body of Christ as we celebrate Eucharist together.

Lent is a unique time; a time of self-discovery, transformation and new beginnings. It is a time to change our minds and hearts toward new ways of thinking and acting. This involves taking a look at where we are and trying to see where we ought to be against the values that Jesus offers his followers.

Fortunately, Lent is not something we have to do alone! We have God's word to give us a lot of help in the process, as well as the example and encouragement of fellow believers who are engaged, in the same exercise!

