



ST. TIMOTHY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
CONNECTIONS
 A SEASONAL NEWLETTER

Giving up and Taking on

“Are you giving something up for Lent?” This question is a common refrain in many Episcopal congregations this time of year. The responses can vary widely—from enthusiastic sharing of one’s plans, to reluctant confession that one doesn’t plan to give up anything, to bewildered surprise from one who may not even be familiar with the practice.



Some Episcopalians engage in a Lenten practice of self-denial, giving up something we like for the season, like meat or alcohol or social media. Others do not. There is no right or wrong option. But perhaps the variety of practices owes something to a lack of clarity about exactly *why* we might give something up.

So let’s start with what Lenten self-denial is not. It’s not about giving up something that’s bad for you, like a New Year’s resolution delayed two months. Nor is it a kind of self-punishment. Yes, Lent focuses on our sinfulness and our need to repent. But treating self-denial as a reminder that we’ve been bad—the spiritual equivalent of sending ourselves to bed with no dessert—distorts what the Lenten practice is about.

Instead, I see two primary reasons why Christians might engage in acts of self-denial. First, as an act of solidarity with those who regularly go without. Historically, giving up luxuries like meat and sweets was something of an equalizer. For forty days, the rich and the poor ate the same kinds of food. Such practices can draw our eyes to those who are suffering or in need. The second reason for this practice of self-denial is to refocus our attention on God. When we start to crave that chocolate we’ve given up or reach for our phone to check the social media account we’re fasting from, we can use that moment to recenter ourselves on God and perhaps offer up a short prayer.

In order to refocus on God, some Christians take on a practice during Lent rather than giving something up. This practice might be using a daily devotion focused on a verse from scripture, like those provided in *Forward Day by Day*, available at the church. Maybe it’s working your way through a particular book of the Bible. Any time we delve into scripture, we’re not just reading a textbook describing how God spoke to people long ago, we’re engaging one of the core ways God speaks to us *now*.

Of course, understanding what God is saying to us now through an ancient text can be difficult, especially with some of the more bizarre or obscure stories of the Old Testament. We’ll be looking at some of these stories in our Lenten series, *Hidden Treasures of the Hebrew Bible*, which you can read more about on page 2. I hope one practice you’ll consider taking on is joining us as often as you can for these Wednesday night programs. But whether you can attend or not, whether you give something up or take something on or neither, I pray this Lent will be a time when we can recenter our lives on God so that we can better follow where Jesus leads us.



Ash Wednesday Services

Wednesday, March 5 at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

The observance of a Holy Lent begins with the imposition of ashes and continues with self-examination, repentance, and other spiritual disciplines intended to prepare our hearts for Easter.

LENTEN SERIES

Wednesdays, March 12 – April 9

6 p.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

6:30 p.m. Dinner in the Parish Hall

7 p.m. Adult Program in the Gathering Center

“Hidden Treasures of the Hebrew Bible”

The Old Testament is full of amazing stories of God’s interaction with the human family. But many of these stories never find their way into our lectionary, and so you could attend church every Sunday and never hear some of these more obscure, and occasionally bizarre, stories. Over these five weeks, we’ll be looking at some of these stories and asking how they relate to our lives today.

March 12: The Talking Donkey

March 19: The Tragedy of the Judges

March 26: A Tale of Two Widows

April 2: God on Trial

April 9: The Witch, the Ghost, and the Doomed King



Children's Music Practice



Simpson Youth Academy Sunday



Welcoming New Vestry Members

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday

April 13 at 10:15 a.m.

Holy Wednesday with Service of Healing

April 16 at 6 p.m.

Maundy Thursday

April 17 at 7 p.m.

Good Friday

Stations of the Cross (Sanctuary)

April 18 at Noon

Interactive Family Stations of the Cross (Parish Hall)

April 18 at 7 p.m.

Holy Saturday Service + Vigil Rehearsal

April 19 at 10 a.m.

Easter Vigil

April 19 at 8 p.m.

Easter Sunday Service

April 20 at 10:15 a.m.

Flowering of the Cross prior to the service;
Easter egg hunt following service



Adult Forum

Sundays at 9:15 a.m. in the Gathering Center

During Lent, Adult Forum will be learning about spiritual gifts. We'll examine what they are and do some exercises to try to figure out what our gifts are and how we are to use them here in church and in our lives outside these walls.

Upcoming Second Offering Partners

MARCH 2025

Women at the Well

APRIL 2025

The Faith and Grace Garden

MAY 2025

Diocese of Nzara





Epiphany Celebration Craft



Chalking the Door



King Cake Competition



3rd Thursdays

Monthly, 6 p.m.

Join us for fellowship and refreshments for our monthly 3rd Thursday gatherings this spring!

March 20: Confluence Brewing Company

April 17: HiFi Brew Lounge

Episcopalians on the Hill

Tuesday, March 11 at 11 a.m. at the Iowa State Capitol

Gather at the Capitol with Bishop Monnot, our diocesan lobbyists, and fellow Episcopalians to learn about public policy ministry and advocate with our legislators. Whether it's your first time at the Capitol or you'd consider yourself a "regular," all are welcome to join! We'll also be with our Lutheran siblings and One Iowa.

Instructed Eucharist

Sunday, April 6 at 10:15 a.m.

We celebrate the Eucharist every week, but the reasons our liturgy takes the shape it does aren't always widely known. Why do we exchange the peace right before the Liturgy of the Table? When do we say "Alleluia" and when don't we? What is Kyle doing with his hands up there during the Eucharistic Prayer?

We'd love to hear your questions about the liturgy, so we can answer them during the Instructed Eucharist! This service will proceed through a typical worship service with explanations narrated along the way. If you've ever wondered about a part of our service, email your question to Kyle or place it in the box that will be available in the weeks before the Instructed Eucharist.

