

DISCOVERING THE MEANING

EMPTY &

FILLED

AND THE POWER OF LENT



Dear CTR Family,

On Sunday, February 14, we begin a new teaching series called **Empty and Filled: Discovering the Meaning and Power of Lent**. As part of this series, we are inviting you to personally observe the season of Lent. Lent is about the gospel. It's just not a Catholic or Lutheran practice; it's for all of God's people, and has been practiced in some form since the 4th century, just after the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. Lent is a time to narrow the focus of the church to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to turn from our sin, and trust in His atoning work.

The season of Lent lasts approximately 40 days, excluding Sundays, between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. The 40 days has its roots in Jesus' 40 days of fasting and temptation in the wilderness. Lent is a season for the Church to symbolically follow Christ into the wilderness. It is a time for fasting and self-denial, though not for the sake of denial itself. It is a period to empty ourselves of lesser things so that we might be filled with the greater things of the gospel in anticipation of Resurrection Sunday.

To practice Lent, we are inviting you to **(1) fast from a common comfort or distraction (e.g. caffeine, sweets, social media) and (2) add or increase a spiritual practice** (e.g. Bible reading, prayer, service). The hope for this season is to empty ourselves of some background noise to be filled with more of the Holy Spirit.

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**By emptying our lives of commotion, clutter and noise,
we hope to create more space in our life
for Christ to speak through His Word.**

To help you think about what God might be inviting you into, we've assembled a few resources and suggestions of ways to be emptied and filled. Inside you will find a list of fasting ideas (empty) and suggested spiritual practices (filled).

There is no "right" way to practice Lent. It can be tailored to fit your personal spiritual journey. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (February 17th). The last day of Lent is Holy Saturday (April 3rd). To kick off the season of Lent we will be hosting an Ash Wednesday night of prayer and worship at CTR on February 17th from 6:45-7:45 at CTR. Additional ideas and resources for practicing lent (including a Lenten prayer guide and daily devotional) can be found at www.christtherock.org/lent.

Lent is about growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ. We want to do this together as a church family to grow in our love of Jesus. We hope you'll prayerfully consider joining us in the practice of Lent as we anticipate the celebration of Easter.

EMPTY

TRADITIONAL FASTS OF LENT:

- Give up candy/sweets
- Give up or limit screen time
- Give up eating snacks between meals
- Give up or limit soda or coffee
- Give up or limit video games
- Give up or limit alcohol

If you struggle to make time for **prayer**, try one of these:

- Delete the two most used apps on your phone
- Set strict time limits for social media use (or remove it all together)
- Give up hitting snooze
- Give up reading or watching the news
- Get up 15 minutes earlier every day to pray

If you want to grow in **humility**, try one of these:

- Fast from any and all criticism
- Only drink water - no other drinks
- Find 6 of your favorite things (clothes, books, gadgets) and give one away each week
 - Give up seeking the attention and approval of others
- Look for every opportunity to give up your seat for another person

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**Turn to me now, while there is time.
Give me your hearts.
Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning.
Don't tear your clothing in your grief,
but tear your hearts instead.**

Joel 2:12

If you want to **detach yourself from worldly things**, try one of these:

- Give up buying coffee out (*and consider donating the money saved to a ministry*)
 - Give up watching sports (*even March Madness*)
 - Give up online purchases
 - Give up looking in the mirror
- Give up or limit makeup
- Give up or limit TV (*including Netflix, Hulu, Disney+, etc...*)

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES – WAYS TO BE FILLED

- Daily Lenten Devotional – (find link at christtherock.org/lent)
- Pray the Daily Prayers of Lent (find link at christtherock.org/lent) or see next page
- Perform a daily act of kindness
- Read through the book of Psalms
- Wake up 15 minutes earlier to pray
- Sit in silence for 10 minutes a day to listen for God’s voice
- Don’t listen to the radio or music while you drive, and talk to God instead
- 40 days of letter writing, encouragement, or phone calls
- Memorize a scripture verse a day
- Read through all 4 Gospels
- Pray for a different person each day for 40 days
- Pray for unreached people groups and countries in the 10/40 window
- Send a meal to 1 person/family a week
- Support a CTR missionary with 40 days of focused prayer and/or increased financial support (see CTR website for partners: www.christtherock.org/outreach)

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**So whether you eat or drink,
or whatever you do,
do it all for the glory of God.**

1 Corinthians 10:31

DAILY PRAYERS FOR LENT

- W: DESIRE TO REPENT AND WALK CLOSELY WITH JESUS
- T: GROWING LOVE FOR THOSE AROUND ME
- F: GOD TO BE EXALTED AND LOVED ALL OVER THE WORLD
- S: GOD TO SAVE UNBELIEVERS IN MY LIFE
- S: MY CHURCH TO BE HEALTHY
- M: UNITY BETWEEN CHRISTIANS
- T: GOD TO SHOW HIS POWER IN UNEXPECTED WAYS
- W: GRATITUDE IN THE HEARTS OF GOD'S PEOPLE
- T: THE NEXT GENERATION TO TREASURE JESUS
- F: GOD TO PROTECT THE UNBORN
- S: GOD TO PROVIDE WISDOM WHERE IT'S NEEDED
- S: MY CHURCH TO BE FILLED WITH LOVE
- M: OPPORTUNITIES AND COURAGE TO SHARE THE GOSPEL
- T: POWER TO COMPREHEND THE LOVE OF GOD
- W: SELF-CONTROL FOR FIGHTING SIN
- T: COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO ARE QUESTIONING FAITH
- F: THE CHURCH TO DEMONSTRATE RACIAL UNITY
- S: DEEPER SENSE OF HOPE DESPITE TRIALS
- S: MY CHURCH TO BE BOLD IN EVANGELISM
- M: FORGIVENESS FOR WAYS WE FAIL TO LOVE
- T: DEEPER TRUST OF GOD
- W: INCREASED DESIRE TO OBEY GOD'S WORD
- T: ABILITY TO SEE PEOPLE LIKE JESUS DOES
- F: PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS TO STAND STRONG
- S: PASTORS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL WITH POWER
- S: MY CHURCH TO BE GENEROUS
- M: MORE AWARENESS OF GOD'S WORK IN MY LIFE
- T: SEXUAL PURITY IN MYSELF AND OTHERS
- W: WILLINGNESS TO EMBRACE SUFFERING FOR CHRIST
- T: PARENTS TO NURTURE CHILDREN IN THE GOSPEL
- F: JOY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES
- S: THOSE WHO WILL BE INVITED TO EASTER SERVICES
- S: MY CHURCH TO IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY
- M: DISCERNMENT TO KNOW GOD'S WILL
- T: DIRECTION ON WHO NEEDS ENCOURAGEMENT
- W: INCREASED GRATITUDE FOR GOD'S KINDNESS
- T: DEEPER EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S SPIRIT
- F: CHURCH LEADERS WHO ARE PREPARING FOR EASTER
- S: GOD'S KINGDOM TO COME ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN
- S: MY CHURCH TO BE HUNGRY FOR GOD
- M: STRENGTH FROM GOD TO OBEY HIM
- T: COMPASSION TOWARDS THOSE DIFFERENT FROM ME
- W: CHRISTIAN STUDENTS TO BOLDLY LIVE THEIR FAITH
- T: GROWING ABILITY TO PRAY WITH FAITH
- F: POWERFUL CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S LOVE
- S: GOD TO OPEN THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE TO HIS LOVE

DUST:
Ash Wednesday Worship Experience
Wednesday, February 17 6:45PM



Easter Sunday
Sunday, April 4
8:00 | 9:30 | 11:00

You can find more information at www.christtherock.org/easter