

## 2021 FAST-A-MEAL GUIDE TO PRAYER

***YET EVEN NOW, SAYS THE LORD, RETURN TO ME  
WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH FASTING. JOEL 2:12***

For centuries, Christians have fasted and prayed through the season of Lent. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, believed fasting helps us **remember Christ's sacrifice** and **join our sacrifice with His**. It helps us **turn from darkness** and **look to the light of resurrection**. It helps us **wait for God's guidance** and **see the promises of God's hope**. Wesley called Christians to “**fast, give alms, and pray.**” We hope this guide will help you do that this Lenten season.

### **Week of Ash Wednesday** (Feb. 17-20) **YET EVEN NOW**

**Daily Scriptures:** Joel 2:12-17; Isaiah 58:5-11; Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21; Psalm 51:1-15

**Meditation:** There's something powerful about a season that starts in the middle of the week. Lent is not for the faint of heart. It's a reminder of the strenuous journey ahead. The ashes remind us of our mortality and sinfulness yet provide a sense of hope and faith. Joel's call, and the Ash Wednesday invitation, is to join with the community in a deep and heartfelt repentance that brings us back together into right relationship with God.

**Suggestions for Action:** Pray about something to “turn away from” or to “turn toward” during Lent. Covenant to fast during this season.

### **First Week in Lent** (February 21–27) **THIS IS THE SIGN**

**Daily Scriptures:** Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Romans 8:24-28; Mark 1:9-15; Isaiah 40:27-31; Luke 4:16-21

**Meditation:** We're on a journey that starts with a promise, a covenant, from God. A simple and profound truth: God is with us; we are not alone. God sends a sign as a reminder of this promise. We see that sign beyond ourselves in the natural light refracting through the rain, producing an arc of color, and we become the sign. Under Christ's guidance the church can become the sign of the presence of God as we seek to gather up the scattered beloved of God into one covenant community of faith.

**Suggestions for Action:** Look for ways you can move beyond pointing at the signs of God at work in the world—which is a vital and important work for disciples to be about—to being the sign that God is with us.

### **Second Week in Lent** (February 28-March 6) **WALK BEFORE ME**

**Daily Scriptures:** Genesis 17:1-7; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; John 17:9-19; Mark 8:31-38; Micah 6:6-8; Psalm 82:1-4

**Meditation:** Names are important; they tell our story. We take on names like *Disciple* and *Christian* when we enter into a covenantal relationship with God. Abraham shows true sacrifice by taking on a new name and identity as a sign of his commitment to God. Even when he didn't have the answers, Abraham was still willing to believe and walk before God.

**Suggestions for Action:** Share your story of commitment this week.

**Third Week in Lent** (March 7-13) **ALL THESE WORDS**

**Daily Scriptures:** John 2:13-22; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 1 John 3:16-22; Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 23; John 15:12-17

**Meditation:** As a community of faith, we make commitments to one another, live in covenant with one another, and celebrate who we are as the body of Christ. Scripture depicts the kind of people we can choose to be; people who love God and love others. All these words create a picture that helps us see beyond our vision.

**Suggestions for Action:** Show God's love to someone this week.

**Fourth Week in Lent** (March 14-20) **LOOK UP AND LIVE**

**Daily Scriptures:** Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22; John 3:14-21; Numbers 21:4-9; Philippians 4:5-9; Psalm 42:1-8; 1 Peter 3:10-12; Ephesians 2:1-10

**Meditation:** Sometimes we need to let go and let God. Let go of the need to be in control or the need to have everything your way. Let go of what was and grab hold of where God is calling you to go, where God is calling you to be.

**Suggestions for Action:** Name one thing you need to let go and give to God.

**Fifth Week in Lent** (March 21-27) **WRITTEN ON THE HEART**

**Daily Scriptures:** Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 143; Romans 8:31-39; Jeremiah 29:4-7; Luke 6:20-26; Hebrews 5:5-10; 1 Timothy 6:17-19

**Meditation:** Love is a verb and requires action. It's a call to move, to call out injustice, to tear down divisions, to lift up the oppressed. But sometimes we get it wrong. Lent is an opportunity to reorient our hearts. A time to confess and invite the Spirit back to work of writing on our hearts so that we can live our calling of loving God and loving others.

**Suggestions for Action:** Pause and reflect on the words written on your heart.

**Holy Week** (March 28-April 3) **THE ONE WHO COMES**

**Daily Scriptures:** Matthew 21:1-11; Isaiah 42:1-9; John 13:1-15; Mark 15:42-47; Psalm 118:19-29; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 27:62-66

**Meditation:** In a matter of days, Jesus went from a parade to the way of sorrows, from the king of peace to a hated criminal, from "Hosanna" to "Crucify Him." Even in the midst of chaos, we are still given hope in a seemingly hopeless world.

**Suggestions for Action:** Ask God to show you how to share the hope of resurrection. Write down how this experience has helped you on your journey.

We hope you have a blessed season of fasting and prayer. For more information on Restore Hope or to make a donation to help us serve our neighbors in need, visit [www.restorehope.org](http://www.restorehope.org).