



## ***Lenten Fast Parameters***

***February 17 – April 3, 2021***

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Lent is a 40-day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Saturday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. During Lent, *we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting.* We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a *true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully.* We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also *baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.*

Many know of the tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, but we are also called to practice self-discipline and fast in other ways throughout the season. Contemplate the meaning and origins of the Lenten fasting tradition in this reflection. In addition, *the giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts*—not only through the distribution of money, but *through the sharing of our time and talents.* As St. John Chrysostom reminds us: “Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs.”

In Lent, the baptized are called to renew their baptismal commitment as others prepare to be baptized when gathered worship resumes. We do so by reaffirming and rearticulating the covenant that Our Lord has made with us and that we have made with Grace Church International. *We should pledge to live more fully into that covenant, during Lent and beyond.*

This Lenten Season, Grace Church International will observe the Lenten fast in the following ways:

I. ***Seek The Lord*** through:

- a. Earnestly renewing and deepening our commitment to Jesus and to His church through self-examination, repentance and holiness.
- b. Daily meditation upon Psalm 92 as our foundational text for this year.
- c. Daily prayers offered Monday-Saturday collectively at 6:00 AM EST on the GCI 6a Prayer Call Line (Number: 605.313.4118; Code: 120152#)
- d. Concerted efforts for perfect attendance and full participation in Sunday morning and Wednesday evening corporate worship online.



II. *Serve The Lord* through:

- a. Mercy Ministry with Food Distribution.
- b. Personal outreach to those persons whom we've not seen or heard from during the pandemic.
- c. Acts of Kindness to those outside of the Household of Faith.
- d. Sharing our faith and the love of Christ with a different person each day for the forty days of Lent.

III. *Self-Control* through:

- a. Fasting meat every Friday during Lent.
- b. Reducing our food intake by cutting out sweets and pleasantries every day of Lent.
- c. During the Triduum, the final three days of Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, fasting meat all three days.
- d. Increasing our exercise regimen as embodied prayer, remembering those who are hospitalized, infirm, or bed-ridden, bearing the burden of families who have lost members to COVID-19.
- e. Saving \$200.00 per member of Grace Church International to be presented as a Special Offering on Resurrection (Easter Sunday) morning above our tithes and offerings.

Fasting will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021, and conclude on Holy Saturday, April 3, 2021. We will observe Sunday dispensations from the fast as days for worship, prayer, and giving during the Lenten season. *'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of The Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in The Lord'*

(I Corinthians 15:58).