


# Bishop's Message: Lenten Blessings

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Dear Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we continue in the holy season of Lent, I hope you are discovering a deepening connection with Jesus Christ through moments of prayer, repentance, and self-reflection. At the same time, I extend an invitation for you to give thanks for a profound aspect often overlooked — the unity we share as members of the statewide Episcopal Church. Beyond mere association, it is through our various parishes, committees, organizations, and schools, with all the diversity that is represented, that we collectively make up the Episcopal Church in Delaware. We are stronger together — we are one Church.

The season of Lent has historically been a time for Christians to simplify their lives, with the stated intent of drawing closer to God. The irony, however, lies in realizing that God is already as close to us as our next breath. What we must do is take down the obstacles that prevent us from embracing this reality. The Ash Wednesday call to observe “a holy Lent” beckons us to self-examination, repentance, prayer, fasting, self-denial, and meditation on God’s Word (Book of Common Prayer, pg. 265). These spiritual practices are incremental steps leading us to more fully accept the grace that God is always extending to us. I encourage you, dear friends in Christ, to observe a holy Lent intentionally. Embrace repentance, prayer, fasting, and self-denial with purpose. Consider abandoning a habit taken for granted or adopting a new practice that challenges you.

If you find yourself grappling with a discipline, have faltered in your efforts, or have yet to embark on this journey, do not despair. Lent is not about perfect observance of disciplines but about acknowledging our dependence on a perfectly loving God. Confess where necessary and endeavor to restart or reshape your disciplines.

Our Lenten observance is not complete until we journey with Christ through the events of Holy Week and Easter, and I encourage us all to take this opportunity to immerse ourselves in the mysteries central to our faith. Be sure to check the schedule of your worshipping community for complete details and times, but below is a simple guide to the services you might expect.

- **March 24 (Palm Sunday): The Sunday of the Passion**

Sunday before Easter. A celebration of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, followed by his betrayal and crucifixion. This day is observed with palm branches and a reading of the Passion Gospel.

- **March 28: Maundy Thursday**

Thursday before Easter. Commemorates the Last Supper and is often observed with foot washing, stripping of the altar, and overnight prayer vigil to keep watch with Jesus in the garden.

- **March 29: Good Friday**

Friday before Easter. The most solemn day of the church year, observing the day Jesus was crucified. Often observed by praying the Stations of the Cross and a special liturgy, including the reading of the Passion and praying of solemn collects.

- **March 30: Holy Saturday**

Saturday before Easter. A day of somber reflection, remembering the day Jesus laid in the tomb.

- **March 31: Easter Sunday**

Alleluia! Christ is risen! This day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. We sing alleluias and celebrate with an abundance of joy!

Remember, perfection is not the goal; God is, both in Lent and always.

Blessings,

The Rt. Rev. Kevin S. Brown