



Church of the Good Shepherd Lenten Resource Guide

2026

For centuries the Church has entered this season to remember God's faithfulness and await his coming again. Within these pages, you're invited to join that ancient rhythm of hope and promise.



THE LITURGICAL NEW YEAR

LENT 101

Lent draws us into the Church's ancient practice of repentance, inviting us to follow Christ into the wilderness and be reshaped for new life in him.

PRAYER | FASTING | ALMSGIVING

The Church year is a spiritual discipline of remembering the *Story of the People of God* and the *Story of Jesus*. Danielle Hitchen writes in her book, *Sacred Seasons*, “As we orient our **day** to the work of God, our **week** to the resurrection, and our **year** to redemptive history, these rhythms of sacred time fundamentally reform our identity as the people of God, enabling us to embody the Gospel in every season.”

Liturgical Color: Purple

The color purple represents penitence and mourning making it a fitting color for the season. It was also chosen because it is made by mixing blue (the color of hope) with red (the color of blood).



A Message from the Taylors - Lent 2026

Dear Friends,

The Church year follows two cycles divided into three acts. The Cycle of Light tells the story of God, and the Cycle of Life tells the story of the people of God. Each cycle has a season of preparation, a season of celebration, and a season of proclamation.

The Cycle of Life begins with Lent, its season of preparation. Lent is an intentional season during which the Church slows down and reflects on her inner life, both individually and corporately. It is a time to assess your spiritual health, omitting the things which distract you from Kingdom focus, and taking on habits which align you Kingdom living.

As a season of preparation, Lent is designed to “clear the decks” of our spiritual life before the celebration of Easter and the proclamation of Ordinary Time.

In these pages, you will find an overview of the Lent and a list of resources for your personal edification during the season. This Lenten Resource Guide was created by Rebecca as the first resource of the St. David’s Institute in 2021 and has been updated each year. It has been used by many Episcopal churches since its creation, and we are thrilled to offer it to you this year. It is designed to be a tool to help you observe a holy Lent, that you may encounter the Living God.

Our hope and prayer is that each of us would be transformed from the inside out this season, and that this guide would enhance your Lenten journey.

Porter+ and Rebecca Taylor

The Liturgical Year

The Liturgical Year is broken into two cycles: The **Cycle of Light** and the **Cycle of Life**. Each cycle has three phases: **preparation, celebration, and proclamation.**

STORY OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

CYCLE OF LIGHT

Preparation

Season of Advent

Celebration

Christmas

Baptism of our Lord

Proclamation

Epiphany

CYCLE OF LIFE

Preparation

Lent

Holy Week

Easter

Celebration

Easter

CYCLE OF LIFE (CONTINUED)

Pentecost

Trinity Sunday

Ordinary
Time

Proclamation

Allhallowtide

Christ the King Sunday

STORY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Note: The outline of the Liturgical Year above is not precise as dates fluctuate. The length of the seasons of Epiphany and Ordinary Time vary from year to year based on the date of Easter. This outline is meant to give a general overview. When in doubt, refer to lectionarypage.net

"Of" or "In"



Did you know that Sundays are *of* Advent but *in* Lent? The nuance may seem small, but it is of great significance. In Lent, Sundays are not included in the 40 day fast, so they are *in* but not *of* Lent. Advent does not distinguish one day of the week from others as all are a form of preparation, so Sundays are *of*, not *in*, Advent.

Bonus Thought: Being *of* indicates a similarity in essence (like being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit), and being *in* suggests a temporal location. This is a deeply profound distinction between our two penitential seasons.

The image features three purple, pointed pillars of varying heights, each containing a gold cross with four small circles at its ends. The pillars are set against a background of a desert landscape with rocky hills and a few trees under a clear sky. The pillars are arranged in a row, with the tallest one in the center and two shorter ones on either side.

The Three Pillars

The original Lent was observed by the apostles themselves, and while it adapted, it has been observed in its current 40-day format since the third century.

Lent is the only season of the Church year that has assigned spiritual disciplines, known as the “Three Pillars of Lent.” Each Ash Wednesday, the Gospel passage is from a portion of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21) from which the Church identified the three pillars: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

You may choose to focus on all three for the entirety of Lent, or focus on each intentionally for two weeks.

Prayer

The practice of prayer in Lent is symbolic of a restored relationship with God.

Prayer Ideas:

Lent is a great time to pray and memorize Scripture. Some good options are: Psalm 51 or Psalm 121. Shorter options would be 1 John 1:8-9; Joel 2:13; Luke 15:18-19; Daniel 9:9-10; or Mark 8:34.

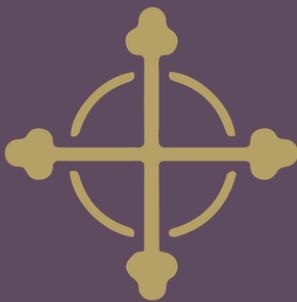
Lent is a traditionally a season to prepare for baptism. For those who have been baptized, it's a wonderful time to pray through the Baptismal Covenant.

Commit to the Daily Office.

Pray through the Decalogue which you can find on page 350 in the Book of Common Prayer. The Decalogue is a responsive prayer through the 10 Commandments which has been in the BCP since the 1552 version.

Ember Days:

There are four sets of Ember Days in the Church year, one set for each season of creation. The Spring Ember Days are the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the First Sunday in Lent (February 21, 23, 24). Traditionally these are days to pray specifically for those pursuing Holy Orders, but it is also a wonderful time to pray for the leadership of the Church, especially for the the clergy in your parish and diocese.



Fasting

The practice of fasting in Lent is symbolic of a restored relationship with self.

Fasting Tips:

Fasting is sandwiched between the pillars of prayer and giving, because it is from our fasting that the other two flow. Fasting should naturally increase our prayer and giving.

The act of abstinence is formational. Christians throughout the centuries have abstained from things that hinder their spiritual health, and not just during Lent. The habit of abstinence is almost foreign in our society which places such a value on obtaining.

Lenten fasts are not an opportunity to break habits you should break anyway. What you choose to give up for Lent is something you should be able to pick up again when Lent ends.

Lenten fasts should be a response to the examination of idols in your life.

Did You Know?

There are only two days when complete fasting from food is normative: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Young children, pregnant and nursing women, the sick, and the elderly are exempt from this recommendation and are not encouraged to take on full-day food fasts.



Almsgiving

The practice of giving in Lent is symbolic of a restored relationship with others.

About Almsgiving:

Alms comes from the Old English word *ælmesse* which means *mercy* and *compassion*.

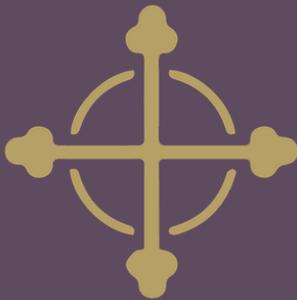
An Episcopal priest in New Jersey wrote this: “Almsgiving is a way of sharing our time and treasure with the poor, and shouldn’t be seen as a replacement for fasting and prayer. Prayer and fasting motivate our service, and our service informs our prayer and fasting.”

Giving allows us to step outside of ourselves by focusing on the needs of others. It also allows us to examine our own consumption, priorities, and stewardship, both of our time and our financial resources.

Things to Consider:

Try pairing your fast with your giving. For example, if you’re giving up your morning Starbucks run, give that money instead to your local church, an outreach partner, or the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund.

While almsgiving is traditionally reserved for the poor, perhaps you see distress or grief in the face of your neighbor. Consider a meal or an act of service to those who are poor in spirit.



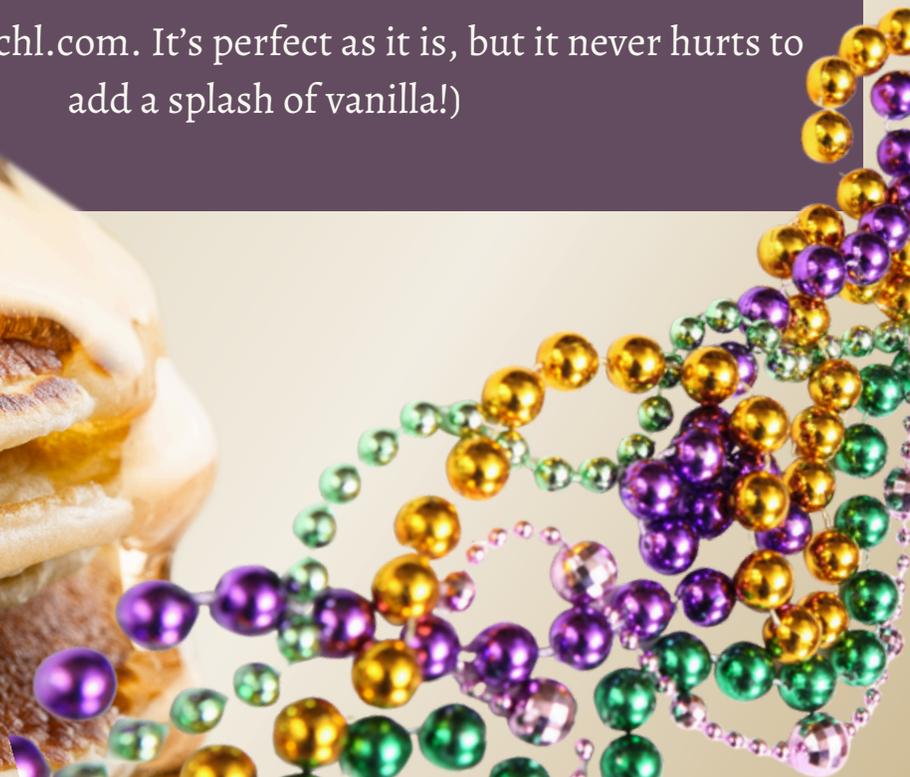
Shrove Tuesday

In the Middle Ages, Christians ushered in Lent with one last hoorah of Lenten-forbidden foods (eggs, sugar, and fat – obviously a pancake recipe) in a big festival preceded, of course, by confession. Using up all those ingredients also led to dubbing the day Fat Tuesday, or its French version, Mardi Gras. While this tradition teaches us something about the human spirit ("why not binge on sin before giving it up, especially right after confession"), it has also given us a pretty fun and tasty tradition in many Episcopal churches.

PANCAKE RECIPE

Melt a stick of butter. Whisk together a cup of milk, 2 large eggs, and a tablespoon of vegetable oil, then add the butter. In a small bowl whisk a cup of flour with 4 teaspoons of baking powder, 4 teaspoons of sugar and a teaspoon of salt. Whisk dry ingredients into the milk mixture just until its combined. Time to cook!

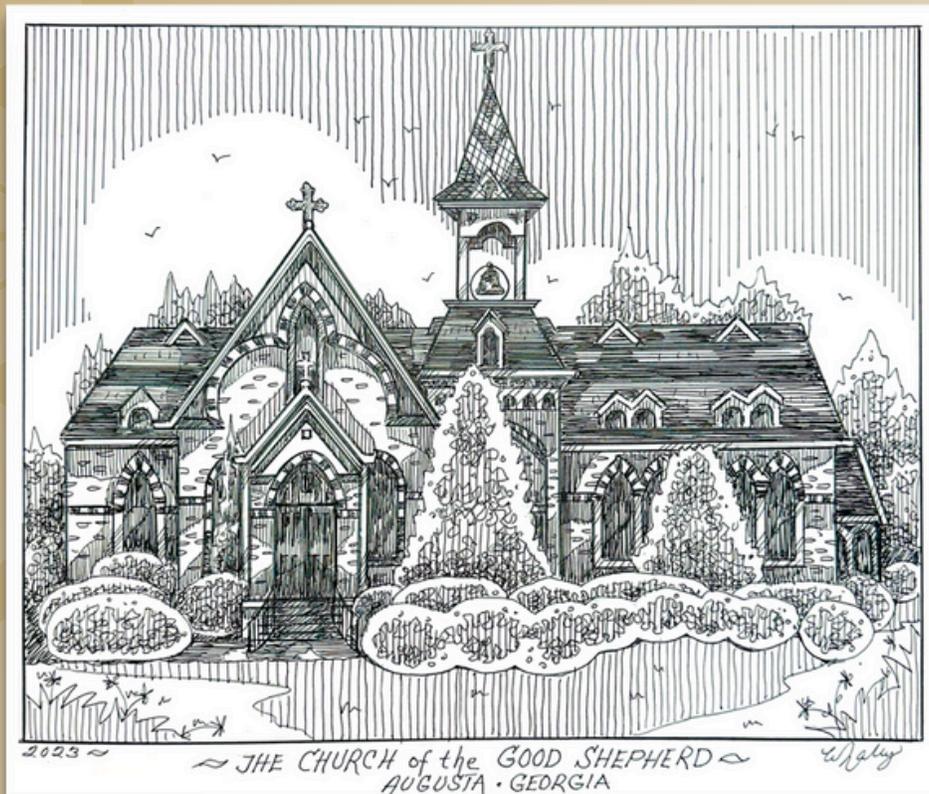
(Recipe is Ruth Reichl's "World's Best Pancakes" taken from her website: ruthreichl.com. It's perfect as it is, but it never hurts to add a splash of vanilla!)



Ash Wednesday



Ash Wednesday, February 18 this year, marks the beginning of Lent. With the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19), the priest makes the mark of the cross with ashes on worshippers' foreheads as an outward and visible mark that the Cross of Christ is the central part of our story as followers of Jesus. Ashes are considered to be a symbol of man's mortality and represent an attitude of humility, sorrow, and repentance. Ash Wednesday is one of two traditional days of fasting in Lent. The second is Good Friday.



Lent at Church of the Good Shepherd

SHROVE TUESDAY | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17 | 6:00pm

Join us for this community event as we use up historically forbidden Lenten foods.

ASH WEDNESDAY | WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 | 7:00am, Noon, 6:30pm

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. With the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return," the priest makes the mark of the cross with ashes on worshippers' foreheads.

EPISCOPAL VISIT WITH BISHOP LOGUE | SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22 | 10:00am

On Sunday, February 22, Bishop Logue will be at Good Shepherd for Confirmations, Receptions, and Reaffirmations. We will have one combined service of Holy Eucharist that day with a reception to follow.

MEN'S LENTEN RETREAT | SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28 | 9:00am - Noon

This Lenten retreat, led by Fr. Porter, invites men into a morning of prayer, teaching, and reflection centered on Christian formation rather than cultural caricatures of masculinity. Through worship and study, we will explore what it means to be formed by Christ.



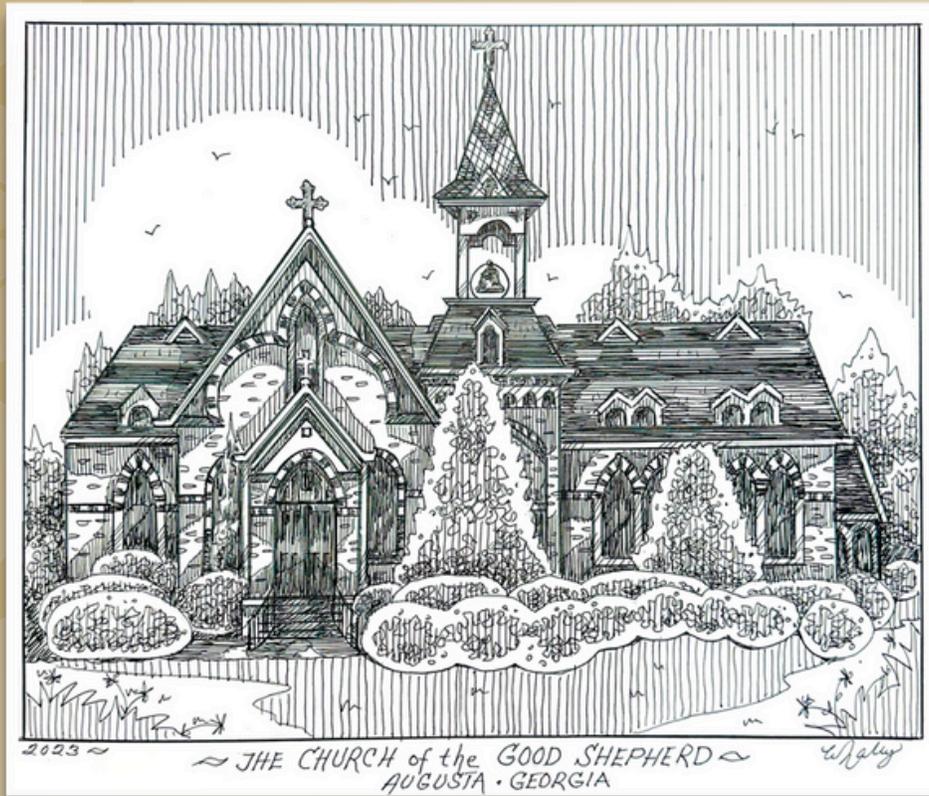
Stations of the Cross

FRIDAYS IN LENT

In the early years following the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, it is said that the holy sites where Jesus walked to the cross were visited by his disciples. When Constantine legalized Christianity in 313AD, religious pilgrimages to the Holy Land became more common. Taking these pilgrimages was often called “Walking the way of the Cross.” By the fifth century, people who could not travel to the Holy Land began to replicate specific places in the Holy Land. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, artists began to represent the Way of the Cross artistically throughout Europe in an effort to tell the story of the Cross without words. Looking at, or “walking” the art became an act of devotion. In the fifteenth century, a pilgrim named William Wey visited the Holy Land and coined the term stations.

The Stations of the Cross commemorate the journey Jesus took from Jerusalem to Golgotha. Lent is an appropriate time to observe the Stations of the Cross as it is an entire liturgical season devoted to remembering the journey from the mountain of transfiguration to Jerusalem. The Stations of the Cross provide an opportunity for us to examine our own lives in light of the cross and to consider anew the meaning of the cross for the life of the world.

Deacon Lynn Tyson will be leading Stations of the Cross each Friday during Lent:
February 20 (1:30pm), February 27 (Noon), March 6 (Noon), March 13 (Noon), March 20 (Noon), and
March 27 (Noon).



Holy Week at Church of the Good Shepherd

For centuries, Christians have observed the week before Easter as a time of special devotion. Holy Week offers a sacred journey beginning on Palm Sunday with the reenactment of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the Lord's Passion. Our journey then takes us to the Upper Room for the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, and through Jesus' betrayal, trial, and crucifixion on Good Friday. We encourage you to participate in each of these services in order to prepare your minds, hearts, and spirits for the Feast of the Resurrection. It is difficult to fully appreciate and celebrate Easter joy unless we experience the rest of the story. We invite you to immerse yourself in this holy time, so that your hearts are ready to sing on Easter: "Alleluia! He is Risen!"

PALM SUNDAY | SUNDAY, MARCH 29 | 8:30am, 11:00am

HOLY WEEK EUCHARIST | MONDAY - WEDNESDAY | 7:00am

MAUNDY THURSDAY | THURSDAY, APRIL 2 | 6:30pm

GOOD FRIDAY | FRIDAY, APRIL 3 | Noon, 6:30pm

For a description of each of the Holy Week services, please see the next page.

Overview of Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday is a liturgy of contrasts and serves as a preview of all that is to come during Holy Week. We open our worship with the Procession of Palms outside and then experience the Passion narrative through the voices of various readers.

The Triduum

The liturgies of the Triduum (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday) have their roots in the historic liturgies of the church in Jerusalem. These worship services should be understood and experienced as one long, continuous liturgy – there is no dismissal at the end of Maundy Thursday nor a greeting or dismissal on Good Friday as we move through the events of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection on the third day.

Maundy Thursday

On Passover – the night before his crucifixion – Jesus gave his disciples a “new commandment” to love. On this night we commemorate the mandate to love, modeling Jesus' washing his disciples' feet. Maundy Thursday services traditionally include a focus on the Last Supper, not only as the beginning of the Triduum (the Great Three Days), but also as the institution of the Lord's Supper, which we call Holy Eucharist or Holy Communion. The liturgy concludes with stripping of all ornamentation from the altar and church and everyone exits in silence.

Good Friday

On Friday before Easter Day, the Church commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus. It is a day of fasting and special acts of discipline and self-denial. The Good Friday liturgy includes John's account of the Passion gospel, a solemn form of intercession known as the solemn collects (dating from ancient Rome), and optional devotions before the cross (commonly known as the veneration of the cross). The Eucharist is not celebrated in the Episcopal Church on Good Friday.



A Prayer for Lent

O God, in your great mercy and steadfast love, you sent your beloved son Jesus Christ, to save and redeem the world, reconciling creation to you: Strengthen us, as your disciples and your Church, during this Holy Lent, that we might be rooted in your faith, on mission in your kingdom, and bearers of your incarnational love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

- Prayer written by the Rev. Dr. Porter C. Taylor

We invite you to use this prayer daily as you journey through Lent toward Easter.



Confession

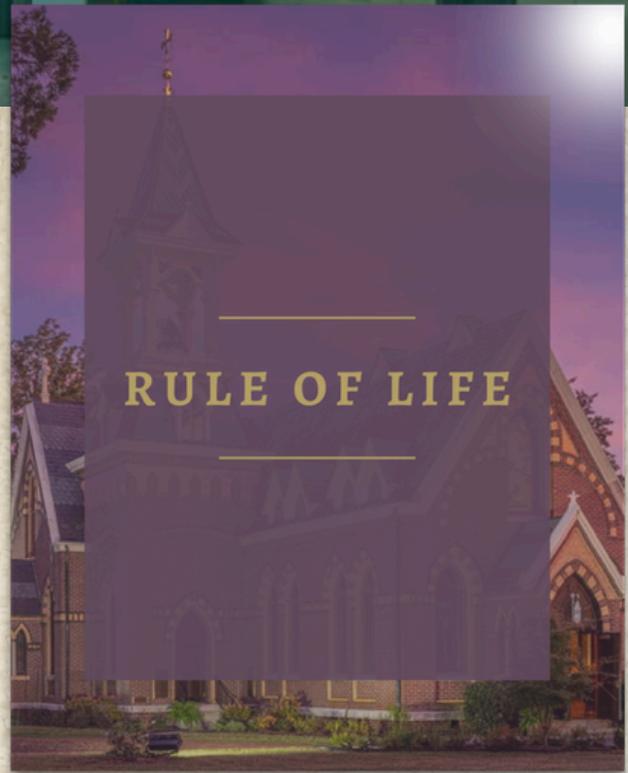
Regarding confession, there is an old Anglican adage: “All may. Some should. None must.”

While general confessions are said during each worship service, Lent is an appropriate time to make private and confidential confessions which can be a very healing experience. In the Episcopal Church, confession is a sacramental rite which follows the Reconciliation of a Penitent in the BCP. While not required, it is a good spiritual practice. Following the confidential confession, the priest will pronounce absolution, reminding us that God knows our sins before we even speak them.

Advent Formation

WAGS

At Church of the Good Shepherd, our Rule of Life study invites both adults and children to grow in a steady, joyful pattern of life with Christ. A Rule of Life is not a set of rigid rules, but an intentional framework for growing in Kingdom attributes and focus.



1Book1Diocese

This Lent, our 1Book1Diocese read is *The Big Relief: The Urgency of Grace for a Worn-Out World* by David Zahl. This book explores grace as God's freeing relief and invites us to receive the rest and renewal found in Christ.

The Diocese will offer a reflection guide for *The Big Relief* and Canon Varner will be leading a Zoom discussion group that will meet weekly during Lent. Visit gaepiscopal.org for more information.

Advent Formation

The Daily Office

Christians, both lay and ordained, have been praying liturgical prayers daily from the very earliest days of Christianity. The Daily Office is a series of services found in the Book of Common Prayer designed to order your day around prayer. The services, known as “Offices,” are Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline.

Daily Office Tips



Pick your verb: You will see people refer to *reading, saying, or praying* the Daily Office. This is just a matter of preference.

X marks the spot: But since the BCP comes with tassels and not an X, use them! Before you begin, mark the Collect, the Lectionary, and the Office to save yourself some "digging" time.

Pick an Office, any Office: Choose one of the Offices and pray it consistently rather than choosing a different Office each day. This allows the words and prayers to "soak in" and become second nature.

Don't change the pronouns: By praying the Daily Office, you are joining your prayers with those of people from all over the world even if you're alone, so don't change "we" to "I."

Mind the gap: If you miss a day or two, don't "catch up." Instead, just use the correct lessons for your first day back.



Easter at Church of the Good Shepherd

GREAT EASTER VIGIL | SATURDAY, APRIL 4 | 6:30pm

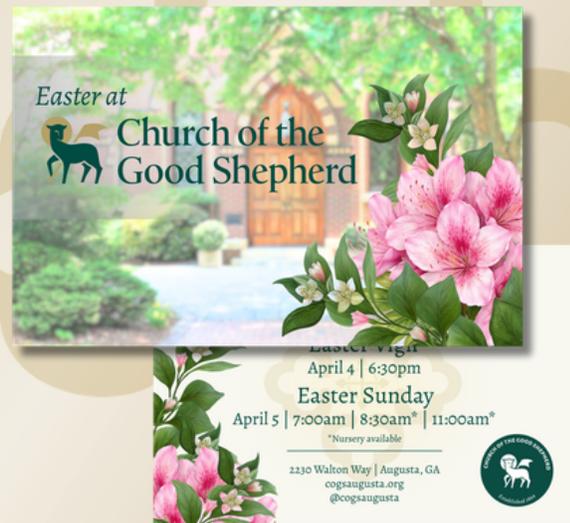
The Great Easter Vigil is the premier liturgical service in the church year. The liturgies of the Triduum (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday) have their roots in the historic liturgies of the church in Jerusalem. The early church believed the Great Easter Vigil to be the climax of the Paschal Triduum. During this ancient service the entire narrative of salvation is read and enacted liturgically, converts are baptized into the family of God, and the Church is given her first opportunity to proclaim, “Christos anesti! Christ is risen!”

FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION | SUNDAY, APRIL 5 | 7:00am, 8:30am, 11:00am

Join us as we worship the risen Lord!

Easter Cards

This is the time of year that families begin making plans to attend Easter services, and research shows that people actually *want* to be invited to church. To help you make invitations personal and meaningful, we’ve created Easter cards—something tangible to hand to a friend over coffee, or pass along at school pickup. In a digital age, a card echoes the heart of Christian community—an invitation rooted in relationship and offered with intention rather than ease. Cards are available on the Welcome Wagon and in the Church Office.





EASTER FLOWERS

If you would like to make a donation toward our Easter Altar flowers in thanksgiving for or in memory of a loved one, please contact Anna-Marie Donnell (worshipsupport@cogsaugusta.org) no later than Wednesday, March 25.

FLOWERING OF THE CROSS

Each year we flower the cross outside the doors of the Nave. You are invited to bring flowers or clippings from your garden to adorn the cross.



EASTER EGG HUNT

Join us at 9:45am on Easter for an Easter Egg Hunt. Children 3 and under will have an egg hunt at the Lychgate and children 4-11 will have an egg hunt on the lawn in front of the Nave.



Additional Resources

DEVOTIONALS & BOOKS

A Way Other Than our Own by Walter Brueggemann

Show Me the Way by Henri Nouwen

Lent and Easter Wisdom by Henri Nouwen

All Shall Be Well: Readings for Lent and Easter

Preparing for Easter by CS Lewis

Lent with Evelyn Underhill by Evelyn Underhill

Opening our Lives by Trystan Owain Hughes

Seven Last Words From the Cross by Fleming Rutledge

The Undoing of Death by Fleming Rutledge

MUSIC

Lent at Ephesus (Benedictines of Mary)

Easter at Ephesus (Benedictines of Mary)



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