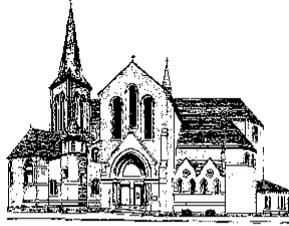

A LENTEN JOURNEY

FOR

THE CHURCH OF THE ADVENT, BOSTON

2022



THE CHURCH OF THE
ADVENT

175 YEARS ✦ FOUNDED 1844

The Church of the Advent values keeping Lent as a community. Though we may all lead separate lives during the week, we join together and find strength and mutual support in a common endeavor of preparation and prayer. In this way we will thereby grow spiritually, both individually and communally, as members of the Body of Christ.

This booklet provides a description and schedule of what members of the Advent will do together during Lent; how we will pray together, and what we will read together as a parish family during this holy time.

INTRODUCTION

Lent, the forty-day period between Ash Wednesday and Easter (Sundays excepted), was historically a period of preparation for “catechumens,” those persons seeking baptism into the life of the church at Easter. Quite soon, however, it became and it continues to be a time of self-examination, penitence and special devotion for all Christians as they prepare for the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus.

One aspect of Lent which is often overlooked nowadays is the communal. In earlier times, Lent was a discipline taken on by the entirety of a community or even a society. It was something which everyone did together, and the rhythm of life in society was adjusted to support this common discipline. Everyone supported everyone else in the discipline of Lent, and society was so ordered as to make this mutual support possible. One might think of this as a kind of spiritual teamwork, and like anything done as a team, it bound people together and helped create community.

In the 21st century world in which we live, this has been completely lost. Christianity, since the Reformation, has become a plurality of “christianities,” not bound by common belief or practice. Society has become almost entirely secular, and the rhythm of contemporary life is most often counter to spiritual practice. The communal aspect of Lent has for most people been lost. That is the reason for this booklet and that is what we are endeavoring to recapture as a parish family at the Church of the Advent.

Lent is more than just a season of fasting and abstinence; it is a positive opportunity for significant spiritual growth. The Orthodox theologian Alexander

Schmemmann describes Lent as “the school of repentance which alone will make it possible to receive Easter not as mere permission to eat, to drink, and to relax, but indeed as the end of the ‘old’ in us, as our entrance into the ‘new’ life we have in Jesus.”

Lent, then, is rooted in an essential aspect of what it is to be a Christian: repentance, *metanoia* in Greek, turning one’s life around, putting off the old self and putting on of the new self, which is made real by the Resurrection of Jesus. It is an intensification of that movement which should be the spiritual rhythm of our lives: a continuous turning away from sin and reorientation toward God.

Lent is about *conversion*.

While we usually think of Lent as a time of fasting and self-denial, we should also approach it as an opportunity for the renewal of those things which form us as believers and strengthen our faith. When we become Christians, we assume a variety of spiritual disciplines so that we will better follow Jesus—we go to Mass, say our prayers, study the Bible and other spiritual classics, make a regular confession, and devote ourselves to good works and reaching out to serve others. During Lent, we should re-dedicate ourselves to these disciplines and make them a bit more stringent as a means to restore vibrancy, life, and passion in our relationship with God. In short, we are hoping to make our hearts and souls bigger, to create more space for God in our lives.

A LENTEN JOURNEY

Daily Readings

During Lent we will read together a common set of Scripture lessons and pray the same weekly prayers. You will need this booklet, a Bible, a copy of the Book of Common Prayer, and a bookmark for each.

If possible, it is helpful to read, to pray, and to meditate in the same place and at the same time each day, preferably in the morning when one is rested and fresh.

Prepare by finding the daily lesson from Scripture in your Bible and finding the Psalm for the week in the Prayer Book. Begin with the Lord's Prayer, then recite the Psalm, with the Antiphon—a phrase read before and after the Psalm. A second Collect appropriate to the week follows. Then read and meditate upon the scripture passage given for the day. End with the Daily Collect.

Some of these readings may be repeated. Scripture is rich in meaning and in implication. We will sometimes look at a given reading and later consider it in a different context to draw out these implications.

Weekly Fasts and Abstinence

Fasting and abstinence are linked with repentance throughout the Scriptures. When we fast we are reminded spiritually and even physically of our weakness, our finitude, and our need for God. Each week, we will abstain from a particular pleasure or shortcoming. We break that on Sundays, which are always “feast” days in celebration of the Resurrection. Similarly, Fridays during Lent are days when Christians have traditionally abstained from meat, as these days are “little Good Fridays,” which point toward the Friday of Holy Week.

You may choose to do each of the suggested communal fasts for one week only; or you may let them build on each other, so that by the end of Lent you are doing all six weekly fasts at the same time.

Palm Sunday, Holy Week and the Easter Vigil

Lent ends on Palm Sunday when Holy Week begins, as do the common disciplines outlined in this booklet. During Holy Week, everyone in the Parish, and especially those who have been making this Lenten Journey together, is encouraged to worship in church each day.

Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum will culminate in the celebration of Jesus' Resurrection at the Great Vigil of Easter at 6:30 PM in the evening on Holy Saturday, April 16.

THE THEME OF OUR LENTEN JOURNEY:

Lord Teach Us to Pray: The Christian's Balanced Personal Prayer Life

Prayer is not something Christians invented. Prior to the coming of Christ at his Incarnation, persons of various faiths and spiritual backgrounds had been offering prayers to deities for millennia. As communal and personal lives of prayer developed through the ages, the people of Israel came to follow their particular form of prayer. Prayers to the God of Israel were maintained largely in the home. A tradition and practice of communal prayer also developed for use in the synagogues and in the Temple. It is from this prayer tradition that Christians have inherited most of the practices in their prayer lives.

Even with the long and deep prayer tradition of the Jewish people, and Jesus' disciples having been steeped in that tradition, still some of His disciples approach Him and ask Him in Luke 11:1, *Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples*. Jesus presents them with one of the two versions of the Lord's Prayer. It is this prayer that has been considered uniquely sacred in the Christian tradition. Many consider this prayer the background of all prayers for Christians. It contains seven petitions applicable to the Christian's life. It is used universally in Christian liturgies around the world, and it is delivered directly from the Lord. Christians use it as part of both their communal and personal prayer practices.

Given that Jesus gives his followers a specific prayer, and given that they already have a practice of private and public prayers, we can assume that prayer is not

something that is optional for the Christian. Jesus' response to the disciple who asked Jesus to teach him to pray began with, *When ye pray, say:* and then He proceeded to give him the Our Father. So prayer is not optional for the Christian. It is not something we do when we "feel" like it, or when the occasion is right, or something that is part of the Christian life if we want it to be. Jesus assumes a life of prayer in his followers.

Our Lenten journey this year will explore what and how we ought to pray in our private, personal lives of prayer. We are aware that there needs to be a balance between our communal prayer lives and our private prayer lives. Both must be included. Then within our private prayer lives there also needs to be a balance. The prayers we say privately must include particular aspects of prayer so that our lives of prayer can grow, develop, and bear more spiritual fruit. We will take each week of Lent and devote that week to private prayer that focuses on petitioning, interceding, confessing, thanksgiving, and adoration.

At the end of our Lenten journey we will have experience in each of the forms of private prayer and by God's grace know the importance and the benefit of keeping each one of the forms of prayer in our lives.

LENTEN DEVOTION OPPORTUNITY

Beginning **Friday, March 11**, on **Fridays during Lent at 12 Noon**, the devotion of The Stations of the Cross will be offered in the church, followed by a meatless lunch of soup and bread.

The Stations of the Cross is a series of meditations on the Passion, the Crucifixion and the Death of Jesus leading to His burial in the tomb. Many Christians through the ages have found The Stations an aid in focussing their Lenten prayers. Some take on this form of devotion as a part of their Lenten disciplines. Consider making it a part of your week.

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 2

12:15 PM	Low Mass with the Imposition of Ashes
6:30 PM	Solemn High Mass with the Imposition of Ashes

The Ashes

Lent begins with the imposition of ashes at Mass as a sign of our mortality and penitence for our sins. As we receive the ashes, we hear the words *Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return* (Genesis 3:19). The ashes are imposed in the form of a cross, pointing to our great hope in the grace of God through the Cross of Christ, which grants us a share in the power of his Resurrection.

The Ash Wednesday Fast

Traditionally, the church has fasted from all food on Ash Wednesday to remind us that our physical hunger for food points to our greater spiritual hunger for God. If you are unable to fast for the entire day, then consider fasting from dinner that evening.

The Weekdays following Ash Wednesday

Creation and Fall

When God acts, according to the book of *Genesis*, He first creates the light. This light dispels the void of emptiness and formlessness and brings creation into being. He later creates two great sources of light which organize time and the

seasons and make human life possible. This light will be fulfilled in the light of Christ which transforms, enhances, and restores human life.

God creates man and woman in His image and He places them in a garden where they will have fellowship with Him and all they need. Man and woman, however, are tempted, and they succumb to temptation and disobey God's one command. By disobedience they alienate themselves from God and by that alienation are expelled from the garden into the world where toil, frustration, and mortality will be theirs.

The Lord's Prayer

Antiphon:

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast; Not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness: But with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (*I Cor. 5:7, 8*)

Psalm 104: 25 – 37, BCP, p. 736f

Repeat Antiphon

The Collect for Ash Wednesday:

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings:

Genesis 1:1–24

Genesis 1:26–2:3

Genesis 3:1–24

The Daily Collect:

O God, our Father, whose Son Jesus Christ in a wonderful Sacrament hast left unto us a memorial of his Passion: Grant us so to venerate the Sacred Mysteries of his Body and Blood, that we may ever perceive within ourselves the fruit of his redemption; Who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Petitioning

One of the types of prayer that ought to be part of one's private prayers is petitioning. Put simply, it is asking God for things for yourself. For some, this is very easy. Some do not hesitate to give God lists of things that they think that they need or want. It does make sense that if God is the author and creator of all things, then he can let us have all the things that we need. If he is the originator of all things, then He is the one to whom to go for all the things we need given to us, or the One to fulfill all our needs. The good thing is that when we give our petitions to God, we are acknowledging that he is indeed the One who provides and blesses us with all things necessary for the health of our spiritual and material needs.

There are some who find it difficult to ask God to bestow some material thing or some spiritual blessing on themselves. They find it presumptuous and think that they are imposing their wishes or demands on God. "Who am I that I should think that I deserve something from God?" might be their attitude toward offering petitions to God. The truth of the matter is that petitioning God is actually an acknowledgement that he knows each of us and knows our needs. By petitioning God we are accepting the truth that he is the one who created us and loves each one of us and knows our needs even before we ask.

When we ask God for things we are placing our lives and everything we need for lives in God's hands. He will give us all that we need and he will give us the things we need in His own time and at the time that is best for us.

Fast: Sweets & Treats

This week, resolve to deny yourself any type of sweets or dessert. This could mean a latté in the morning or chocolate in the evening. As you do so, notice what happens inside when you are denied something you've become accustomed to or something you really want—even something as inconsequential as dessert or candy.

The Lord's Prayer

Antiphon:

All things come of Thee, O Lord,
And of Thine own have we given Thee.

Psalm of the Week: *61, BCP, p. 668f*

Repeat Antiphon

Weekly Collect:

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted of Satan: Make speed to help thy servants who are assaulted by manifold temptations; and, as thou knowest their several infirmities, let each one find thee mighty to save; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings:

Exodus 33:12–23

I Samuel 1:1–20

Esther 5:1–8

Hebrews 5:1–10

I John 5:1–15

Matthew 26:36–42

The Daily Collect:

Almighty God, who hast promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in thy Son's Name: We beseech thee mercifully to incline thine ear to us who have now made our prayers and supplications unto thee; and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to thy will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WEEK TWO

March 14 – 19

Intercession

Petitions are prayers offered to God on behalf of yourself. Intercessory prayers are those offered on behalf of others. Both types of prayers are necessary in a balanced personal prayer life. One cannot continually ask God to intercede in one's own life or the personal relationship with God will be just that, a relationship solely between the individual and God. To keep a balance part of one's prayers offered to God must be on behalf of others.

Christianity is a communal as well as a personal religion. Each Christian by virtue of his Baptism is bound to Christ along with all others who are bound to Christ. The same Holy Spirit makes each one of us part of a Spiritual Body called The Church and it has innumerable members. We are called to offer prayers for all the other members of that Body. There is no such creature as an "individual Christian".

This raises the question, “How effective is intercessory prayer?” When we pray for another person or persons are we really having an influence or persuasion on God as to how He will affect the life of another? Can we change the course of another’s life by asking God to intervene? We really don’t know how our limited minds and imperfect selves could grasp the answer to these questions. All we can do is offer the lives and the situations of those we know and those we have yet to meet into the hands of a loving, merciful, and all-encompassing God; so we intercede for them.

Fast: Unnecessary Spending

This week, resolve to spend nothing on yourself except what is absolutely necessary. Buy no new clothes or gadgets, books or music. Resist the impulse buying which is so easy and instant on the Internet. Eat cheaply and save money. Practice living simply and consider giving away the money you save.

The Lord's Prayer

Antiphon:

But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.

Psalm of the Week: *116, BCP, p. 759f*

Repeat Antiphon

The Weekly Collect:

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from thy ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of thy Word, Jesus Christ thy Son; who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth, one God, for ever and ever.

Readings:

Exodus 19

II Kings 20

I Timothy 2: 1-7

Ephesians 6: 10-20

Romans 8

John 17: 6-19

The Daily Collect:

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ;

give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted,
shield the joyous; and all for thy love's sake. Amen.

Confession

The two great benefits of Christ's love and work for mankind are the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. His sacrifice on the Cross broke through sin, evil, and even death so the grace of God's mercy and forgiveness could be brought to our souls. That benefit of the grace of forgiveness is available to us even now by virtue of the work of the Holy Spirit that has been given to the Church. To realize the benefit of the forgiveness of sins, the Christian must know that he has committed a sin, be sorry for the sin, confess the sin to God, and ask for God's forgiveness. God will forgive sins that are confessed in this way.

We tend to sin while we are in this world. Even after one is baptized original sin is cleansed but we still have wills that are not perfected. This is why we still sin after Baptism. The Good News is that by faith in Christ and His grace through the work of the Holy Spirit we can be forgiven even now.

In our personal prayer lives we ought to include the confession of our sins. This will place our souls in the hands of the healer of our souls, Jesus Christ. We will continually be reminded that we cannot live as we ought to live without the grace of Christ operating in our lives. If we include confession in our personal prayer lives, we will come to know the comfort of forgiveness and receive the help we need to live more closely to the way Jesus wants us to live now.

The sins we confess as part of our personal prayer lives ought to be confessed regularly and attention ought to be given to those sins we might have committed that day or over the past few weeks. There is probably not a day that goes by that we have not used some words that were hurtful, or thought ill of someone, or

maybe not given time to help another. Those are the sins that usually occupy part of our private prayer lives.

To know forgiveness, and be reminded that we are constantly in need of forgiveness, prayers asking for that forgiveness of our sins should be included in our private prayers.

Fast: Careless Talk and Profanity

St. James tells us, “If anyone thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man’s religion is vain.” (*James 1:26*) This week abstain from carelessness in your speech. How easy it is to repeat gossip, to delight in malicious talk, to speak out in anger and wound others with our words, to take the Lord’s name—even the name of Jesus—in vain. Try to become aware of how habitual this kind of talk can become and resolve to curb it.

The Lord’s Prayer

Antiphon:

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. (*Ephesians 1: 7*)

Psalm of the Week: 130, BCP, p. 784f

Repeat Antiphon

The Weekly Collect:

Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls,

that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings:

Leviticus 5

Daniel 9

James 5: 13–20

Luke 23: 39–43

Mark 1: 1–15

John 8: 1–11

The Daily Collect:

Blessed Lord, who in thy forgiving love didst pray for those who nailed thee to the cross, and hast taught us to forgive one another as thou hast forgiven us: Take from us all bitterness and resentment towards our fellows, and give us the spirit of mutual forgiveness and brotherly love; that so, in perfect charity, we may be partakers of thy everlasting kingdom; for thy name and mercy's sake. (*Salisbury Book of Occasional Offices*)

Thanksgiving

It's easy to forget to give thanks. We may politely thank persons for gifts or other kindnesses they have bestowed on us but this occasionally becomes routine. When the giving of thanks is something to which we've become accustomed, then the meaning and the power of the act is reduced. The offhanded "thank-you" or "thanks" loses its importance. This can happen in our prayer lives, so we have to guard against not forgetting to thank God for our blessings and guard against having the prayers becoming too matter-of-fact.

Since we are seeking a balanced personal prayer life, it will be necessary to include the giving of thanks for blessings already received from the Lord. We might think of our prayers of thanksgiving as a kind of "balance" to the prayers of petition. We cannot always ask God for particular things or events, or our prayer lives could be in danger of being too self-centered or self-consumed. Thanking God for what He has seen fit to allow us to have, or happy and good occasions when we have felt truly blessed by Him, are occasions for saying "thank you".

The prayers of thanksgiving do not have to be complicated nor do they have to be offered only when the event is exceptional or even miraculous. God blesses us every day in some way and prayers of thanksgiving ought to be offered even for the seemingly simple blessings. The helpful and favorable aspect of saying prayers of thanksgiving is the more one finds things, events, people, or incidents worthy of a prayer of thanksgiving, the more the list grows.

Fast: Alcohol or Coffee

Choose either coffee or alcohol (or both) and refrain from drinking it this week. If neither is something you regularly enjoy, choose another “staple” in your diet. Pay attention to what happens when you thirst for something you routinely enjoy. Try to pray when you have the desire for the thing from which you are abstaining.

The Lord’s Prayer

Antiphon:

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his mercy
And the wonders he does for his children. (*Psalm 107: 15*)

Psalm of the Week: *136, BCP, p. 789f*

Repeat Antiphon

The Weekly Collect:

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which giveth life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings:

Leviticus 22: 17–33

Isaiah 51: 1–6

I Thessalonians 3

I Thessalonians 5

Philippians 1: 1–10

Revelation 7: 1–12

The Daily Collect:

O God, who hast given us life and all good things in this world: Thou hast created us for thy service, and when we have forsaken thee in our wanderings thou hast sought us out; thou hast vouchsafed to us the precious treasure of thy Gospel; thou hast ordained that we should be born in the bosom of thy Church; thou hast revealed to us thy exceeding great riches in Jesus Christ our Lord. For all these gifts of thy grace, and for thy benefits which we remember not, we thine unworthy servants do give thee thanks, and bless thy holy name for every and ever. (Eugene Bersier)

WEEK FIVE

April 4 – 9

Adoration

To keep a fully balanced prayer life there ought to be times of adoration. The adoration of God the Holy Trinity is an attempt in prayer to simply be in His presence. In being in His presence we love and adore Him for who He is and that He is part of our life and that we are part of His life. This type of prayer is different from the four previous ones in that the others, of necessity, involve language and communication. Any attempt at true adoration ought to try to avoid even words. Adoration is simply appreciating being in the presence of God.

The five types of personal prayers all take practice. Adoration in particular is a type of prayer that may require long periods of prayer and practice to have the Christian realize any “fruit” from the efforts of adoration. Adoration also takes practice because it is best done in silence. It is much easier to place one’s mind and heart in the presence of God in a quiet space and in a circumstance where a specific amount of time has been designated. The more adoration is practiced the easier it becomes.

It may be helpful to realize that we are joining all the company of heaven every time we enter into our prayers of adoration. It can be thought of as taking part with the whole company of those who are worshipping and adoring God the Holy Trinity in heaven.

Fast: Entertainment and Technology

This week, forgo your usual television and entertainment. Turn off the TV, drive without the radio, leave your iPod at home. Avoid social media. Do your best to check and respond only to necessary work emails. What does it feel like to increase the silence in your life? Ask yourself what silence does for you, and spend the time listening for God's voice.

The Lord's Prayer

Antiphon:

Blessed be the holy Creator and Governor of all things,
The holy and undivided Trinity, both now and ever, and to endless ages of ages.

Psalm of the Week: *150, BCP, p. 807f*

Repeat Antiphon

The Weekly Collect:

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: Grant unto thy people that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings:

I Chronicles 16: 1–36

Revelation 4

Revelation 5

Romans 11: 33–36

Luke 1: 46–55

John 14: 1–6

The Daily Collect:

O Thou in whom all things live, who commandest us to seek thee, and art ever ready to be found: To know thee is life, to serve thee is freedom, to praise thee

is our souls' joy. We bless thee and adore thee, we worship thee and magnify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
(St. Augustine)

HOLY WEEK

April 10 – 16

Fast: Food or Meals

Pick a type of food (like meat or carbs or even all “solids”) and fast from it for the week, or pick a meal to skip entirely on a daily basis. If you skip meals, spend the time you would have spent preparing and eating food to pray, read the Bible or some spiritual classic, or serve others.

HOLY WEEK LITURGIES

Schedule to be announced

THE CHURCH OF THE ADVENT

30 BRIMMER STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108

OFFICE HOURS: Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 4:30 PM

www.theadventboston.org 617.523.2377 office@theadventboston.org
