

From the Clergy

Lenten Sermon Videos

Click below to hear **The Rev. Frank Allen's** Sunday sermon preview for the First Sunday in Lent, Sunday, March 1st, 2020.



“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Matthew 5:8,9

Dear People of St. David's,

Welcome to the Season of Lent, which began yesterday with Ash Wednesday, where we were all invited into an “observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word.”

On Monday night, one of the vestry members asked me what I was doing for Lent and I admitted honestly, “I am not sure!” Maybe Lent creeps—or jumps—up on you, like it did me.

While I felt a little embarrassed to not have a holy and polished “clergy answer,” I spent some time the next few days pondering her question and my answer. I pondered how to address all the parts of Lent—prayer, fasting, giving, meditating on God’s word—set in a context of self-examination and repentance. I read Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez’s [Lenten message](#) on mercy and praying for those who you truly dislike, are in conflict with, are separated from, or have difficulty forgiving. I read my sponsoring Bishop Susan Haynes’ [Lenten message](#) on how our practices of prayer, giving, and self-denial bring us to abundant life and healing. And I read and watched Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s [Lenten message](#) focused on praying for our nation. On Tuesday, I was pondering some social activist saints in the Episcopal Church, Emily Malbone Morgan and Professor Vida

Dutton Scudder, and their pairing of deep prayer with action and justice.

All of these messages related to one another around a central core of prayer. This deep connection and reliance on God in prayer produces action rooted in justice and reconciliation. Vida Dutton Scudder wrote, "If prayer is the deep secret creative force that Jesus tells us it is, we should be very busy with it." She added that there was one sure way of "directly helping on the Kingdom of God. That way is prayer. Social intercession may be the mightiest force in the world."

So while I've thought of a few specific things to "do" as part of my Lenten disciplines, prayer is where I want to focus. I want to be one of the "blessed ones" Jesus refers to in the Sermon on the Mount, one pure in heart—a very tall order that many of us struggle to see in ourselves. But I'm grateful that Jesus speaks blessing on all of us and gives us the Holy Spirit to enable us to love and good works.

I'd like to offer three possibilities for focusing our prayers during Lent. 1) Use the Lenten devotional that you should have received in the mail to your home or through the daily emails. See how the daily prayers that go along with the meditations written by fellow parishioners speak to you. 2) Return to the Litany of Penitence from the Ash Wednesday service and pray with it. You can find it on pages 267-269 in the Book of Common Prayer or online at <https://www.bcponline.org/> under "Proper Liturgies for Special Days" then click Ash Wednesday. 3) I'd like to share a more modern prayer with you all that a parishioner shared with me. It illustrates the heart of Lent and I find that it provides me a way to think about pairing fasting and feasting—or *putting off* some things we need to let go of and *putting on* other things we need to return to. I used the style as a base and added my own areas of focus that I thought we might find helpful. Perhaps you too can use it as a foundation and add or subtract the spiritual characteristics you feel called to encourage this Lent. Online you can find much expanded versions of the prayer if you need more specifics, or let your own time of reading God's word bring up your own additions.

Lord, help me to

*Fast from judging others and feast on Christ dwelling in them;
Fast from words that pollute and feast on speech that purifies;
Fast from discontent and feast on gratitude;
Fast from anger and feast on patience;
Fast from selfishness and feast on compassion;
Fast from idle words and feast on spreading good news;
Fast from apathy and feast on prayerful engagement;
Fast from worry and feast on faith.*

Loving God, let us fast from anything that leads us away from you and teach us to feast on all that brings us closer to you and brings Christ to others. Amen.

With blessings,

Emily

The Rev. Emily Zimbrick-Rogers



Regular Worship Hours

8:00am | Holy Eucharist Rite I | Church
9:15am | Holy Eucharist Rite II | Chapel
11:15am | Holy Eucharist Rite II | Church
5:00pm | Holy Eucharist Rite II | Church
