

# Experience Jesus: Lent 2021

Every year, Ash Wednesday signifies the beginning of Lent, a 40-day season (not counting Sundays), leading toward Easter Sunday, and marked by repentance, fasting, reflection, and ultimately celebration. The 40-day period represents Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, when he fasted and when Satan tempted him. Similarly, Lent helps believers to set aside a time each year for fasting, in order to focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection.

Lent is a meaningful way to prepare for Easter. The message of Easter is true whether or not we prepare for it; however, when we take time to intentionally lean into these truths, we can experience a greater measure of the depth and power of Christ's death and resurrection that is available for us. It can also help us to develop necessary practices that will fuel spiritual growth for the rest of our lives.

So, with your Collingswood First Church Family we encourage you to commit yourself to experience Jesus' love and grace in a fresh new way by practicing some of these simple disciplines over the next six weeks. Additionally, it is important to note that we are not meant to do the Christian life alone! We challenge you to pair up with 1-2 other people, and meet/talk weekly with them to share which disciplines you're doing, what you're learning, and pray with each other. Pray through the list below and check off the ones you desire or feel prompted to do.

## Inward/Personal Disciplines:

- Spend time in silence/solitude each day, meditating on God's attributes
- Read a Lenten Devotional daily
- Read a book for inner growth
- Read through the gospel of Luke
- Begin to keep a journal of prayer concerns and praises, or highlights from my Scripture reading
- Focus on thanksgiving, rather than on asking, in prayer
- Give myself a gift of three hours to do something I always say I don't have time to do
- Find a way to go to bed earlier or sleep in so I get enough rest
- Make a list of people with whom I need to be reconciled. Pray for them, asking Jesus to change my thinking and feeling toward them. Reach out to them as God prompts you to do so
- Take control of my life by \_\_\_\_\_
- Be present at Holy Week services as an act of love and waiting with Jesus
- Write out a daily list of my activities, evaluate how I'm spending my time, and plan how I will reorder my priorities
- Forgive someone who has hurt me
- Fast from a regular part of my life through the Lenten season (FaceBook, snacks, watching TV, etc) and use that time for prayer and Scripture instead
- Skip breakfast and lunch once a week and pray during those meal times

### **Outward/Social Disciplines:**

- Do a loving act of service for a neighbor or family member
- Plan to contact a "shut-in" neighbor or church member weekly
- Write an encouraging note/text once a week to a person who has blessed my life
- Contact someone at the church to find out how to join a needed ministry or service opportunity
- Get coffee or a meal with someone I want to know better
- Say "NO" to something that is a waste of money and/or time
- Surrender to the Lord my time, talents and the things I treasure
- Surrender to the Lord my heart and mind, seeking to please Him above all things
- Join - or start - a small group to grow in Christlikeness through the word and relationships (safely in person, or virtually)
- Cut out Starbucks, Wawa, or another place that regularly gets my money, and give that money instead to a local ministry/mission

We hope and pray that this year you will allow the Lord to guide you through this Lenten season so that you might experience Jesus in a greater or different way than ever before. What Jesus accomplished 2000 years ago still has profound relevance and impact on our lives today! May you experience "exceedingly, abundantly more than you can imagine" (as Paul prayed in Eph. 3:20-21) as you surrender your life to him this Lenten season, and may you share that hope with others.