

**INVITATION TO THE
OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Christians have always observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the church to prepare for Easter by a season of penitence, fasting, and prayer. This season of forty days provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for baptism into the body of Christ. It is also the time when persons who had committed serious sins and had been separated from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness and restored to the fellowship of the church. The whole congregation is thus reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our baptismal faith.

I invite you, in the name of the Lord, to observe a holy Lent, by self-examination, penitence, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving; and by reading and meditating on the Word of God. To make a right beginning, and as a mark of our mortality, let us now bow before our Creator and Redeemer.

You are invited to these special Lent & Holy Week services:
Community Lenten Services each week at 5:30 pm, check the church bulletin for exact schedule.

Palm/Passion Sunday, March 29, 9:30 am
Worship will include the Stripping of the Sanctuary

Seder Meal, Tuesday, March 31
6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall, Cost \$15 per person
Ticket must be purchased in advance

Maundy Thursday, April 2 Tenebrae Service
"a service of remembrance"
7:00 pm, Sanctuary

Good Friday Interfaith Service, 6:15 pm
First United Methodist Church

Easter Sunday, April 5, Worship at 9:30 am

Carterville First United Methodist Church
Ash Wednesday
February 18, 2026
7:30 pm



***Engaging People to Experience
the Transforming Love
of God***

Prelude

Greeting

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

P: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all God's benefits.

L: Who forgives all your sins and heals all your infirmities;

P: Who redeems your life from the grave, and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray: *A brief silence.*

Most Holy God, your Son came to save sinners; we come to this season of repentance, confessing our unworthiness, asking for new and honest hearts, and the healing power of your forgiveness. Grant this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn "Beneath the Cross of Jesus"

Hymnal #297

Response

L: Cry, and God will answer.

P: Call, and the Lord will say: "I am here."

L: If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word; if you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed;

P: Call, and the Lord will say: "I am here."

L: Your light will rise in the darkness and your shadows become like noon. The Lord will always guide you, giving you relief in desert places.

P: Cry, and God will answer. Call and the Lord will say: "I am here."

Scripture Lesson Joel 2:12-13

Special Music Whispering Hope Samantha Bursich

Meditation: Pastor Larry
The Miracle of Grace & Forgiveness

Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline (back cover)

Thanksgiving Over the Ashes

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Let us pray: Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth; grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, so we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

P: Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

Psalm of Confession

Psalm 51

Hymnal #785

Absolution

L: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

P: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

L: Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ our Lord.

P: To you, O Lord.

The Peace

L: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

P: And also with you.

Dismissal with Blessing

L: Go forth into the world in the strength of God's mercy to live and to serve in newness of life. May Jesus Christ, the bread of heaven, bless and keep you.

P: Amen.

L: May the Lamb of God who laid down his life for all, graciously smile upon you.

P: Amen.

L: May the Lord God order all your days and deeds in peace.

P: Amen. Thanks be to God.

Please depart the sanctuary quietly, so that those who would like to remain for a time of personal meditation and prayer are not disturbed.