

## Lent 2024

### Generosity as faithful response to God

Traditionally we think of Lent as a time of dedicated prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Meditating on this tirade during Lent can be traced back to the year 325 AD, but the essence of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving goes back much farther into our biblical history, with our biblical ancestors well before Jesus. When we meditate on this tirade, we are stopping to consider how God is calling us to respond to his love for us. For Lent 2024, we are inviting you to consider the following idea:

#### *Generosity as*

- *a spiritual movement through prayer (discernment with God), fasting (reflections on relationships with God and others) and into a life of almsgiving (acts of charity), as displayed in our language and actions toward our neighbors, known & unknow.*

To help us ponder this idea together, you are invited to use the following guide. There are 11 lessons for the season of lent. Each lesson has a scripture focus, and topic for reflection, and a suggested prayer (feel free to create your own as the spirit moves you.) The last column was created in partnership with the Mission and Outreach team, giving you the opportunity to live generously in new and unique ways.

Text focus	Fasting (Reflection on relationships)	Prayer (Discernment with God)	Almsgiving (Charity)
<u>Feb 14<sup>th</sup> Ash</u> <u>Wed.</u> Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21	What items, objects, activities, habits, and/or biases keep God far away? What can you focus on that draws you closer to God and others?	Dear Lord, help us to reconnect with you, opening our eyes to opportunities to see you with fresh vision. Where we have been blind to your generosity, let us see with restored sight. Amen.	<u><i>You are invited to consider new and/or even unique opportunities to live as the light of Christ this Lent.</i></u>
<u>Sun Feb 18<sup>th</sup></u> Genesis 9:8-17 Mark 1:9-15	What special objects or places do you have in your life that represents the covenant relationship you have with God and others?	God of the covenant, we are thankful for the rainbow and cross. May they be continual reminders of your commitment to us, and the baptismal promises granted to us, empowering us to live a life of grace and share generously. Amen.	Consider new ways of speaking or using words of generosity with others, especially in circumstances that are stressful.
<u>Wed Feb 21<sup>st</sup></u> Deut. 6: 1-10 Mark 12:30-31	In what ways do you use your strength, mind, soul, and heart to connect with God and others?	God of compassion, you loved us even before we were in the flesh. You breathed us into existence with your creative love. Empower us to use our language to breathe love and offer generosity to others. Amen	Consider your generosity to the mission of Zion Lutheran. How are you empowered to help the gospel story be told through the congregation and its people?
<u>Sun Feb 25<sup>th</sup></u> Genesis 17:1-7,15-16 Mark 8:31-38	Think of a time when you have been harmed by a broken commitment. How is God's commitment to you a gift that helped you heal?	God of strength, even after being beaten and wrongly prosecuted, you picked up the object of your demise, the cross. Help us be as strong, to use the things that would harm us as places to mature, turning the burden into a life-giving event for others. Amen.	Consider your generosity to the mission of Zion Lutheran. How are you empowered to help the gospel story be told through the congregation and its people?

<p><u>Wed Feb 28<sup>th</sup></u> Genesis 12:7-8,13:4, 18 Mark 12:30-31</p>	<p>Name a time when you were in unknown territory, unsure of where to go. How did connecting with God help you find direction?</p>	<p>God of the nations, as we are called into new circumstances that feel different, help us to build places of reflection and connection with you, turning the unknown into a place of knowing your generosity. Amen.</p>	<p><u>Consider donating to any one of the organizations below.</u> <u>There will be collection bins at the church.</u></p> <p><b>Safe Harbor:</b> toilet paper, paper towels, baby wipes, tampons, 13-gallon garbage bags, twin or full bedding sets.</p> <p><b>Sleep in Heavenly Peace:</b> twin bedding and quilts.</p> <p><b>Spurs:</b> Farnam Fly Spray, Horse treats, mane and tail brushes, Lysol, toilet paper, paper towels, 5-gallon water buckets, hand soap.</p> <p><b>Salvation Army:</b> canned vegetables, soup, pasta sauce, cereal.</p> <p><b>Aberdeen Area Foster Closet:</b> diapers, Pull ups, basic need items (socks, underwear, toothpaste, wipes) Ziploc bags (quart and gallon).</p>
<p><u>Sun Mar 3<sup>rd</sup></u> Exodus 20:1-17 John 2:13-22</p>	<p>Have you ever used the 10 commandments as barrier to treating your relationship with others generously? How can they act as guides to respect God and others teaching us how to live with generosity?</p>	<p>God of the law, help us understand that laws are gifts that help us live into deeper relationships, cultivating relationships with you and others. Keep us from using them as barriers or walls from our neighbors. Amen.</p>	
<p><u>Wed Mar 6<sup>th</sup></u> Deut 15:11 Mark 12:30-31</p>	<p>Consider a time when someone saw your need and did not help. What was your response? How did God open his hands of generosity for you?</p>	<p>God the most high, the needs of the people are great, and often we are unable to help due to a variety of reasons. Help us be creative in opening our hands to serve with generosity. Amen.</p>	
<p><u>Sun Mar 10<sup>th</sup></u> Num 21:4-9 John 3:14-21</p>	<p>Have you ever grumbled against God because of pain or confusion? How did reconciliation result?</p>	<p>God of purpose, you are clear with your language, because of love you act, and your action is about saving reconciliation, not condemnation. This is the essence of all generosity. Help us be so moved to live this type of generosity for others. Amen.</p>	
<p><u>Wed Mar 13<sup>th</sup></u> Zech 7:9-10 Mark 12:30-31</p>	<p>Consider a time you felt alone. What brought you connection and comfort? Where was God?</p>	<p>God who guides, even when we feel alone, help us to feel your presence with us. When we see others alone, empower us to be your generous presence. Amen.</p>	
<p><u>Sun Mar 17<sup>th</sup></u> Jer 31:31-34 John 12:20-33</p>	<p>Can you remember a time you lost something important to you? How did God help restore you to being connected?</p>	<p>God who connects us into one body, when we are feeling lost, reconnect us so we are restored and made whole again. When our neighbors are lost, help us be a generous light to guide them to you. Amen.</p>	
<p><u>Wed Mar 20<sup>th</sup></u> Lev 19:17-19 Mark 12:30-31</p>	<p>Think of a time you were new to a community, where no one knew your name. How did the welcome and love of others connect you into the community?</p>	<p>God of community, your greatest command demands that we use all of our self to love and honor you and others. This is a profound act of generosity; help us live it in relationship to our neighbors and our self as a way of honoring you. Amen.</p>	