

The 40 Days of Lent

**A season of special opportunities
and experiences for 2024**

Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. (Mark 8: 34 NLT)



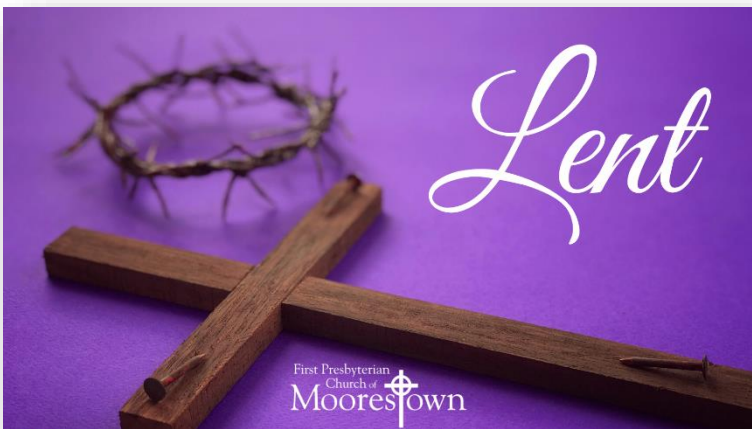
The Meaning of Lent

*"O Lord, make this Lenten season different from the other ones.
Let me find you again. Amen."*

Henri Nouwen

The 40 days of Lent have historically been a time of fasting, prayer, and study for those wishing to grow closer to God. It can be a time for personal and collective reflection and transformation. We look honestly at ourselves and are reminded of who we belong to while aligning with Christ's sacrifice. In scripture, the number 40 is significant as the Israelites spent forty years in the wilderness preparing for the promised land, and Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days to prepare for his ministry. These two stories show us that God can use Lent to help us make new choices and begin a new direction for our hearts and lives.

In 2024, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday February 14, and continues through the five Sundays in Lent: February 18, February 25, March 3, March 10 and March 17. Palm Sunday is March 24 leading us into Holy Week and Easter.



Lent Worship Schedule 2024

A time of prayer, fasting, discipline

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Worship (Lord's Supper)

February 18 ~ First Sunday in Lent (Lord's Supper)

9:00 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

February 25 ~ Second Sunday in Lent

9:00 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

March 3 ~ Third Sunday in Lent (no communion)

9:00 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

March 10 ~ Fourth Sunday in Lent

9:00 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

March 17 ~ Fifth Sunday in Lent

9:00 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

March 24 ~ Palm Sunday / One Great Hour of Sharing

9:00 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

One Great Hour of Sharing fish boxes returned in both services

Education Hour 10:15-11:15 am

Children's Sunday School and Adult Spiritual Formation

Lent



Holy Week Worship Services

Special Observances

March 28 ~ Maundy Thursday Drama “At The Table”

7:00 pm Miller Commons, Communion served

March 29 ~ Good Friday Tenebrae Worship

7:30 pm Sanctuary

March 31 ~ Easter Sunday

6:30 am Sunrise Service (Cemetery Cross)

9:00 am Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)

11:00 am Contemporary Worship (Commons)

No Children’s Sunday School or Adult Spiritual Formation

No Nursery Care to allow families to worship together

Ash Wednesday February 14

Worship 7:00 pm



We begin the Journey of Lent on Ash Wednesday **February 14th**. Worship will be at 7:00 pm, led by Stuart Spencer, and featuring the imposition of ashes and serving of the Lord’s Supper. If watching at home, please have a communion serving for yourself and those with whom you are worshipping.

Scheduling Note: On Ash Wednesday, there will be no Kingdom Kids, Crossing Zone or Family Dinner so families may worship together. Middle School Youth Group will meet at the regular 6:30 pm time and plans to attend worship.

Lent Sermon Series Starts February 18

“Meeting Jesus at the Table”

In the season of Lent, Pastors Allen and Spencer preach a sermon series called, *“Meeting Jesus at the Table.”*

Tables are one of the most important places of human connection. We’re often most fully alive to life when sharing a meal around a table. We shouldn’t be surprised, then, to find that throughout the Bible God has a way of showing up at tables. In fact, it’s worth noting that at the center of the spiritual lives of God’s people in both the Old and New Testaments, we find a table: the table of Passover and the table of Communion. New Testament scholar N. T. Wright captured something of this sentiment when he wrote, *“When Jesus himself wanted to explain to his disciples what his forthcoming death was all about, he didn’t give them a theory, he gave them a meal.”*

Memory Verse:

“Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.” (Revelation 3: 20)



Per Capita Giving for the larger church

Please return by February 29, 2024

February is Per Capita time. Your Stewardship Committee asks you to please cover your share of \$38.75 per member * (*includes teens and adult children)

- Last year 284 of our church members covered their individual \$38.75 in per capita.
- 43 members opted out, requesting that the church *not* pay their per capita.
- \$20,973 was taken from operating funds to cover the balance we are obligated to pay the Presbytery for non-responding members.

While that may not seem like a large amount, it is revenue that COULD have been spent to:

- Provide shelter to a family evicted by their landlord
- Provide Vacation Bible School scholarships for children to learn about Jesus
- Provide lunch supplies for Feeding 5000 to feed the hungry
- Repair sudden storm damage to our aging roof
- Provide funding for choir members otherwise unable to attend the youth choir retreat

Please CHOOSE one of the following (return **by February 29, 2024**):

1. I will pay my Per Capita of \$38.75 per member -- mail the enclosed envelope, [pay easily online](#), place in offering at church (2 members = \$77.50, 3 members = \$116.25 etc.)
2. I ask First Presbyterian Church to pay my Per Capita
3. I choose to *opt out* of Per Capita -- must submit request online at <https://fpcmoorestown.churchcenter.com/people/forms/670113> or call church office

Learn more at oga.pcusa.org/section/departments/per-capita/

Centering Prayer with Stuart Spencer

Wednesdays in Lent (6:30-7:00 pm)

February 21-March 20 (Hayes Room)

“Centering Prayer is first and foremost a method of prayer. As such, its goal is communion with God. It helps us draw closer to God. It deepens our relationship with God. Unlike more common types of prayer, centering prayer is wordless and practiced in silence and most often in solitude. Moreover, centering prayer is a distinctively Christian form of meditative prayer. At its core, centering prayer involves sitting in silence with God and surrendering or disengaging from our thoughts and feelings.”

- Brian Russell, *Centering Prayer*

Join Pastor Stuart Spencer for an introduction to a form of contemplative prayer known as centering prayer. Stuart shares the biblical foundation for this prayer of surrender with direction on how to begin the practice. Classes include a short period for centering prayer. Classes are 30 minutes and follow the Wednesday evening Family Meal. The class meets in the Hayes Room with a Zoom option.

ZOOM LINK

Topic: My Meeting for Centering Prayer

Time: Feb 21, 2024 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every 5 weeks on Wed, until Feb 21, 2024, 1 occurrence(s)

Feb 21, 2024 06:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89245133475?pwd=K0R2UUtIOEluVHpydXFjRSDh5WHJGZz09>

Our Lenten Journey

The season of Lent is a time of prayer, fasting, penitence and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days — like the flood of Genesis, Moses' sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah's call to Ninevah to repent and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness. The Sundays in Lent are not counted in this reckoning of the time between Ash Wednesday and Easter, as every Lord's Day is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

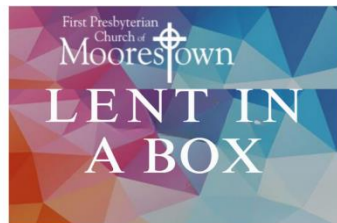
“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

- Luke 23:42

“Lent in a Box” for Families

Creating meaningful memories together

Lent-in-a-Box is a take-home activity we are offering to FPC Moorestown families. Each box contains everything that's needed. Families will pick one day each week, and after dinner or before bedtime, gather for prayer, Scripture, and discussion from the devotional in the box. This Lent-in-a-Box is themed “The Light that shines in the darkness.” This does not require much time, but families, especially children, will look forward to each week with anticipation of growing and becoming more Christ-like. What better way to learn and grow in these things than as a family?



The Lent-in-a-Box will be available beginning Wednesday, February 14th, in the Commons Lobby, during Kingdom Kids and Crossing Zone on our Family Dinner nights as well as on Sunday mornings in the Commons Lobby. *One per family please; first come first serve.*

Sign Up: Church-wide Lenten Book Study

Read: "Meeting Jesus at the Table"

As we prepare for Lent, we invite you to participate in a Small Group Study entitled "Meeting Jesus at the Table." This 8-week study, beginning the week of **February 11**, promises to be a meaningful and enriching journey as we explore the profound connections between Jesus and the act of sharing meals. The study explores numerous instances where Jesus shares a meal with his disciples, friends, tax collectors, and even Pharisees.

To sign up; visit our Church Center event page:

<https://fpcmoorestown.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2152780>

Books are available for purchase at the church (\$13). Please contact [Wes Allen](#) or [Alison Mackey](#) in the church office at 856.235.1688 for questions or to sign up.



Winter Inquirers' Class for New Members

February 28, March 2 & 3

Are you interested in learning more about First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown and possibly joining the congregation? The Membership Committee extends an invitation to you to attend its Inquirers' Class. The Inquirers' Class is for those interested in learning more about FPC Moorestown and the Presbyterian Church as a whole. The three-part series is comprised of a Wednesday evening in-person/Zoom class, a single Saturday in-person class, and a meeting with Session to be received into membership. We're looking forward to learning more about you! [Sign up online](#) or with the church office. The class will meet at the following times:

- **Wednesday, February 28** (7:30 pm, come to Family Dinner as our guest 6-7 pm)
- **Saturday, March 2** (8:30 am-12 noon, Room 8)
- **Sunday, March 3** (12:15 pm with Session)

Moorestown Ministerium Food Pantry

Support the pantry throughout February

During this Lenten season and the month of February, we are hosting a food drive for the Moorestown Ministerium Food Pantry. The food pantry is in dire need of food for distribution to hungry families in our area and supports 40-50 identified families in need in the Moorestown, Mount Laurel, Maple Shade, Delran, Medford areas. Please see our [Church Center event page](#) for suggested items.

Please take our challenge to bring three food items every time you come to FPC Moorestown for church, meetings, rehearsals or fellowship. Help us address food insecurity here in Moorestown.

Easter Flower Sales (\$15.00)

Orders Taken February 25, March 3 & 10

On Easter, congregation members may remember a loved one, honor an individual or recognize an occasion by purchasing assorted spring Easter flowers (\$15) to be placed in our two worship spaces on Easter Sunday, March 31. Order forms will be available in *Connections* and [online](#) on **February 25, March 3 and March 10**. Please mail your payment or drop in the church office or offering plate. Flowers may NOT be *purchased* online at this time. Order forms may be submitted online but payment must be separate.

Can you help the deacons deliver to those who may have trouble coming to worship? Sign up on your order form or contact Gail Sorin or Bobbi Vogelsong. Orders and payment for Easter flowers are due on or before **Sunday, March 10**.

Children's Easter Celebration

Saturday, March 23 ~ 10:30 am

The [Children's Easter Celebration](#) will be **Saturday, March 23** from 10:30-11:30 a.m., and OUTSIDE (weather permitting). Celebrate the joy of Easter with an Egg hunt for children ages 2-10. There is no charge; canned food for the food pantry as an entrance will be welcomed. If it rains, we will move inside. Don't forget your basket!

We are looking for donations of candy and small toys for the event. Donate candies that are fun size, nut-free and individually wrapped, small toys, stickers or tattoos that will fit in a standard size plastic egg. Please do NOT prefill eggs as the items are sorted by age. Drop off candy and toys at the church office by **Tuesday, February 27**.

Palm Sunday Offering March 24

One Great Hour of Sharing

Typically received during the Season of Lent, this offering for [One Great Hour of Sharing](#) supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promotes development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assists in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Each works in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work provides people with safety, sustenance, and hope. [Gifts may be made online](#) using our One Great Hour of Sharing drop down, and special pew envelopes for the offering will be available.

Fish Banks – One Great Hour of Sharing

Return on Palm Sunday March 24

As is our tradition, in Sunday School or at the Ash Wednesday service February 14, children may pick up a Lenten Fish Box or coin bank for "One Great Hour of Sharing" as a means of charitable giving during Lent. Completed fish boxes will be collected during both Palm Sunday services on **Sunday, March 24th**.



Palm Sunday Choral Concert: March 24

WJCMS Orchestra & Adult Choir

On Palm Sunday, West Jersey Chamber Music Society ends its 2023-24 concert season with Festival Music for Choir, Brass, Organ and Percussion being performed by members of the West Jersey Chamber Symphony and Chorale and Adult Choir of First Presbyterian Church. John Rutter's celebratory *Gloria* anchors a program of polychoral works from A. Gabrieli, Leisring and Schutz. This event is a collaborative event with West Jersey Chamber Music Society and is a ticketed event: \$28 Regular, \$20 Seniors. All students 18 and under are admitted FREE. Tickets will be available at the door or online at www.wjcms.org. For additional information please contact Joann Nawrocki at (609) 417-2873. The concert is at 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church.



Thursday Prayer Service Schedule

There will be no virtual Thursday prayer service on Maundy Thursday, March 28th so that individuals may attend the special drama "At The Table."

Holiday Office Closure

On Good Friday March 29, the church office will close at 1:00 pm.

Spring Recess Schedule, Easter Break Fellowship Groups and Choirs

Tuesday, March 26

No Junior Choir

Wednesday, March 27

No Kingdom Kids, No Crossing Zone, No Family Dinner, No Middle School Youth Group, No Primary Choir

Sunday, March 31 (Easter)

No High School Youth Group

Tuesday, April 2

No Chapel Choir

Wednesday, April 3

No Kingdom Kids, No Crossing Zone, No Family Dinner, No Primary Choir, No Junior Choir, No Choristers. Middle School Youth Group will meet.

For further information contact Holly Ascitutto, Dave Favell or Joel Krott.



Pick up an Easter Postcard

Invite a guest to come to church

Invite a friend to worship as we remember our Grow The Kingdom commitment “I Will Invite.” New Holy Week/Easter postcards will be available throughout the church on **Sunday, March 17** so people can pick one up and invite someone to Holy Week or Easter events. There are address lines for people to mail as well. The worship guides for **Sunday, March 24** (Palm Sunday) will have the postcards inserted (both services).

Special Easter Giving

Easter is an opportunity to share our church’s ministry through the lens of the cross and resurrection. Jesus gave everything for us, including his very life. Your Easter donations, given above your regular tithes and offering, support our programming and connection to the greater community.

In 2023 the Church relied heavily on the use of restricted funds due to a significant decrease in projected revenue. The budget team was able to close out 2023 strong and meet our year end obligations -- a remarkable example of careful planning, active financial management and the unwavering generosity and dedication of our congregation.

Your Easter gifts can help us continue to navigate these waters. Donate easily from the Church Center app, online at www.fpcmoorestown.org, mail in your check or leave in the offering box at either worship service. Special Easter offering envelopes will be available in the Sanctuary pews, in Miller Commons and also in boxed envelope sets. Offerings will not be collected at Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, or Good Friday Tenebrae services.

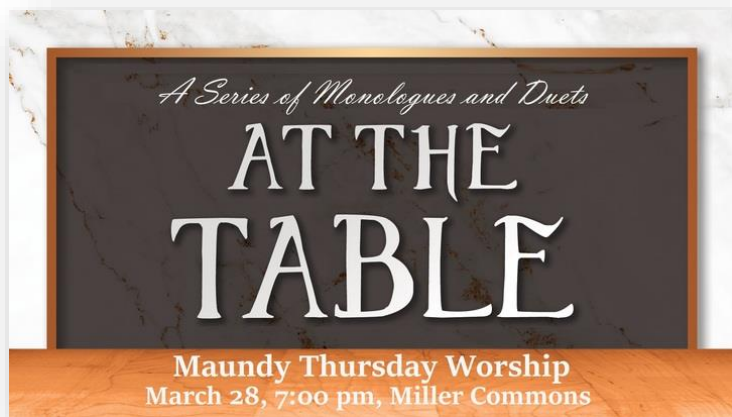
Maundy Thursday Drama, Communion

Thursday, March 28 ~ 7:00 pm

On Maundy Thursday we will be performing the play **At the Table** by Tracy Wells. This play is a collection of monologues and duets that depict the events of Holy Week from Palm Sunday to The Last Supper through the voices of the disciples and others who encountered Jesus that week. It is told as Jesus and his disciples gather in the upper room for the Passover feast, and fits nicely with our Lenten Theme of "Meeting Jesus at the Table."

Maundy Thursday, also known as Holy Thursday, commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles. On this day, Christians remember the Last Supper and how Jesus washed the Disciples' feet. During the meal Jesus took bread and wine and shared them with his disciples.

FPC Moorestown's Alex Wilkie will be directing and Rev. Wes Allen leads. We are looking for children and adults who would like to participate as actors. Give it a try! Please contact Wes Allen at wallen@fpcmoorestown.org or 856.235.1688, x101 or Alison Mackey at amackey@fpcmoorestown.org or 856.235.1688, x 113.



Good Friday Tenebrae Worship

Friday, March 29 ~ 7:30 pm

"Tenebrae" is the Latin word meaning "darkness." The service of Tenebrae is characterized by a gradual extinguishing of candles and a "strepitus" or "loud noise" taking place in total darkness near the end of the service. Pastor Stuart Spencer leads this service on Good Friday evening.

The story of the suffering and death of Jesus from John's gospel is divided into separate readings. After each segment of the story is read, a candle is extinguished. After the last reading, which confirms that Jesus had died on the cross, the last of the lit candles is extinguished or taken away, and a loud sound (*strepitus* in Latin) is made to convey the sense of total loss of God's presence and the effect of the death of Jesus on the universe. The final story of the burial is read in near darkness. Worshipers leave in silence to ponder the impact of Christ's death and await the celebration of the coming Resurrection.



Easter Worship

Sunday, March 31

He is risen! He is risen, indeed!

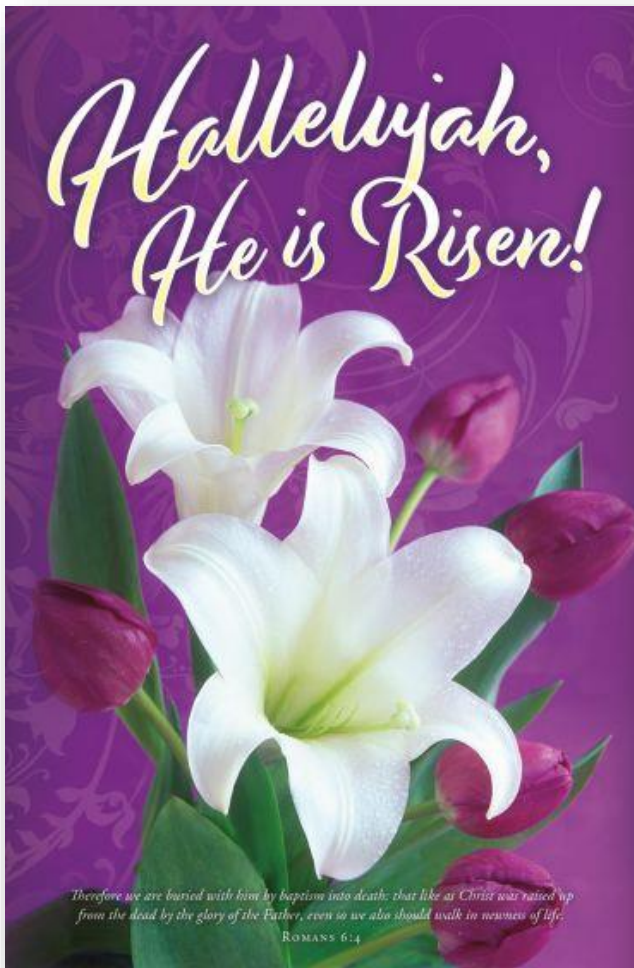
- Easter Sunrise Worship 6:30 am (Cemetery Cross)
- Easter Worship 9:00 am (Traditional, Sanctuary)
- Easter Worship 11:00 am (Contemporary, Miller Commons)
- No Adult Spiritual Formation, Children's Sunday School or Nursery Care to allow families to worship together

Easter Monday

Monday, April 1

The church office, church building and Step by Step Christian Preschool are closed Monday April 1.





First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown
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