



LENT 2024

Encounters with Jesus

What is Lent?

Good Friday and Easter are two of the most important days of the Christian calendar on which God made the riches of his grace known through the death and resurrection of Christ.

How do we get ready to celebrate Good Friday and Easter Sunday? Over the years, the church developed a tradition called Lent. Lent can be traced back to the 2nd century. During this season, new Christians would fast and study in preparation to be baptized on Easter Sunday. Eventually, entire congregations practiced Lent as a sign of Christian discipleship. It was a season of special emphasis on disciplines like living simply, prayer, fasting, giving to the poor and doing acts of service.

Christians counted forty days back from Easter (excluding Sundays), like Christ's forty-day fast in the desert (Luke 4), to determine the time frame of the Lenten journey. Lent is a forty-day journey on which we can stop, look, and listen to what God is doing. It's a journey for which we should ask ourselves, "What things do I need to leave behind so I can travel closer to Jesus? What things should I take with me?" On that journey, we stop to see what God wants us to do. We stop to see what it means to suffer for Jesus' sake and to see what the Bible says about Jesus' suffering. Finally, we walk, step by painful step, with Jesus on the road to the cross during passion week. It's a hard road, but it shines with glory on Easter morning when we celebrate Christ's resurrection!

Lent 2024: Encounters with Jesus

As part of our Lenten journey, it is tradition at *Grace Sacramento* to hold a special season of giving in concert with the practices of Lent to empower gospel ministry near home and around the world. We are calling this effort to give above and beyond our regular Sunday offering **LENT 2024: Encounters with Jesus**. Through it, we hope to provide generously to our short-term mission team traveling to Turkey this summer, joining pastor Ihsan Cetin in sharing Christ in a community that is 90% Muslim. We will also hope to empower our Mercy and Care team to launch a Stephen Ministry program to provide care to members of the Grace Sac community going through massive life changes like grief, loss and transition. We intend to give two dollars to the mission in Turkey for every dollar we spend on our own congregation's care through Stephen Ministry. Our goal is to raise \$9,000 (\$6,000 to Turkey, \$3,000 to Stephen Ministry).

Grace Sacramento is planning multiple special events as part of **LENT 2024: Encounters with Jesus** including:

February 18 th	<i>Encountering Jesus: Professing Your Faith</i>
February 27 th	<i>Encountering Jesus in Prayer & Worship</i>
March 16 th	<i>Encountering Mercy and Care: Homeless Outreach</i>
March 29 th	<i>Encountering His Sacrifice: Good Friday Service</i>
March 31 st	<i>Encountering Resurrection: Easter Celebrations</i>

Prayer Calendar

Our 2024 Prayer Calendar includes prayer requests in numerous ministry areas; for local/international partner missionaries, for our Tahoe Park community, our pastors/staff, Session and Diaconate. Use this guide to frame and lead you in your daily prayers. We hope that this season would be both an "emptying" and "filling" time of preparation as you journey towards Easter.

Week 1 (February 14-17)

- 14 (Ash Wednesday): As we begin our 40-day journey through Lent on this Ash Wednesday, pray that this season of "filling" and "emptying" will lead us closer to Christ.
- 15 (Thu): For this special season of giving in concert with the practices of Lent to empower gospel ministry at home and abroad.
- 16 (Fri): That Grace Sacramento would be a church that seeks to put Christ on display in Sacramento and in the neighboring communities around us.
- 17 (Sat): For Pastor Brad as he preaches on Sunday. Pray that we would be drawn to Christ as we hear the Word. Pray for Brad's family: Olivia, Flannery, Asher and Story.

Week 2 (February 19-24)

- 19 (Mon): For our session (elders at Grace Sac) and their families as they shepherd the flock among us. Pray for wisdom, humility in oversight and leadership.
- 20 (Tue): For our growing kids' ministry. Pray that every child will hear the gospel in a way that they can understand and they would come to know the great love of God for them.
- 21 (Wed): For our Women's Prayer and Care groups as they seek to deepen in their relationship to God and each other. Pray as they look at what it means to rest in Christ.
- 22 (Thu): For CRU Sac Metro (campus ministry) as they seek to reach students for Christ. Pray for the Clay and Mockford families as they engage with students and student leaders.
- 23 (Fri): For those considering membership at Grace Sacramento. For opportunities for accountability and affirmation in their walk with God.
- 24 (Sat): For Pastor Daniel as he preaches on Sunday. Pray that we would hear Christ and that would lead us to obedience. Pray for Daniel's family: Karen, Joshua, Caleb and Abigail.

Week 3 (February 26-March 2)

- 26 (Mon): For our diaconate and their families. Pray that they would be good stewards of the resources we have as we used it to care well for the people and needs of Grace Sac, as well as those in our neighborhoods and communities.
- 27 (Tue): For our growing youth ministry. For growth in grace and knowledge of Jesus to face the challenges of temptation and doubt. For times to learn at the Rooted Youth studies.
- 28 (Wed): For our Grace Groups that gather regularly. Pray for deepening of faith and relationships as our groups go through the book of Romans. Pray for new leaders to emerge.
- 29 (Thu): For our missionary family in Brookton, Western Australia. As they resettle and reconnect with old and new members of their church and community.
- Mar 1 (Fri): For infant baptisms and professions of faith. Celebrate the many families who will be baptizing their children this month. Pray for godly shepherding at home and church.
- 2 (Sat): For Pastor Brad as he preaches on Sunday of the encounter the blind man has with Jesus. Pray for Brad as he continues work in our denomination in church planting and encouraging church planters in our area (*Mission to North America*).

Week 4 (March 4-9)

- 4 (Mon): For our administrative staff at Grace Sacramento (Bethany, Martha and Simone). Pray for the details they take care of each week in the business of the church.
- 5 (Tue): For Mia and our worship team as she coordinates teams, music and liturgy for our services. Pray for soft hearts as the teams lead in worship each Sunday.
- 6 (Wed): For young people, for singles, for married couples, for families, for widows and the elderly. Pray that people would find their place in the greater family of the church.
- 7 (Thu): For our missionaries/pastors we support in the Middle East. Pray for our relationship with current partners and for the opportunities to send a team there this summer.
- 8 (Fri): For gospel-preaching churches in the downtown core that ministers to people in the city. Pray that as we seek to minister in these diverse ethnic, social-economic and culture-making places that we would represent a beautiful mosaic of the gospel.
- 9 (Sat): For Pastor Daniel as he preaches on the encounter of Mary & Martha (the brother of Lazarus) with Jesus. Pray for our walk with God and continued journey in discipleship. Pray for Daniel's work with campus ministries (*Reformed University Fellowship*) in our region.
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Week 5 (March 11-16)

- 11 (Mon): For Mia and our youth volunteers as they seek to model Christ to our youth through the *Rooted* studies, events/outings and personal relationships.
- 12 (Tue): For our GraceKids' volunteers and teachers. Pray for Chris Odneal as he coordinates volunteers, lessons, trainings. Pray for new volunteers who love the Lord and children.
- 13 (Wed): For our landlords (St. Paul's Lutheran Church). For their congregation. And for their flourishing and witness in Tahoe Park.
- 14 (Thu): For pregnant and new moms in our congregation. Pray for grace through pain and discomfort. Pray for encouragement and joy in the addition to their families.
- 15 (Fri): For grieving families dealing with loss of a loved one. Pray for all who feel alone, rejected or suffering that they would be reminded of God's faithfulness. Pray for renewed hope, strength, health and steadfastness through it.
- 16 (Sat): For Pastor Brad as he preaches on Sunday of a foot washing. Pray that we would grow in our ability to rest and be with Christ alone.
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Week 6 (March 18-23)

- 18 (Mon): For all of the teams (hospitality, welcome, set-up) who care well for people and our facility. Pray that guests would feel welcomed at Grace because of their acts of service.
- 19 (Tue): For our childcare workers (nursery) and our childcare volunteers during Bible studies and Grace Groups, etc. who care for our children.
- 20 (Wed): Pray for the men of our church as we prayerfully and thoughtfully create spaces for men to connect with other men and with God. Pray for the gatherings (breakfasts), they would be a place for authenticity, for growth and friendship.
- 21 (Thu): For our "Mission Task Force" as they seek begin the task of rolling out a mission's philosophy to support current missionaries and find new opportunities for mission work.
- 22 (Fri): For a new "forever home" for Grace Sacramento. That God would open doors and a space to be a church that plants churches.
- 23 (Sat): For Pastor Daniel as he preaches on Palm Sunday. Pray for every pastor in our city preparing for passion week and Easter. Pray that the message of the resurrection would be proclaimed with power across our city.
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Week 7 (Passion Week: March 25-30)

- 25 (Mon): *Jesus cleanses the temple* – Pray that Grace Sacramento will be a worshipping church and one that seeks to serve those who find their way through our doors.
- 26 (Tue): *Jesus confronts the religious leaders* – Pray for those whom God has called to lead our church. Pray that our leaders would lead with humility, wisdom and discernment.
- 27 (Wed): *Jesus anointed* – A woman breaks an alabaster jar and washes the feet of Jesus with her hair. Jesus praises her repentance and devotion and shows her forgiveness. Pray that in our repentance, we would remember our first love.
- 28 (Maundy Thursday): *The Last Supper* – Pray for the ways we love each other at Grace. Pray that we would follow Christ's example of serving each other and washing each other's feet.
- 29 (Good Friday): *Good Friday* – Spend time considering the ways we have sinned against Jesus. Pray for forgiveness. Pray for deep anticipation and need for resurrection power in your life.
- 30 (Sat): *Holy Saturday* – Pray for those who will worship for the first time or the first time in a long time on Easter. Pray for Brad as he prepares to preach the hope of the gospel and of a glorious resurrection.
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Additional Resources

Here are a few additional resources you might find useful for your own Lenten journey and for celebrating by yourself or together as a family. Look for the following resources on the internet, or you can find the links on our website. *Additional resources on our website.

[On Keeping a Holy Lent](#) (article by Craig R. Higgins, *Trinity Presbyterian Church, PCA*)

[Lent Resource Guide](#) (website for *Calvin Institute of Christian Worship*)

[To Ash or Not to Ash](#) (article by Dr. Tim LeCroy, *Christ Our King Presbyterian Church*)

[History of Lenten Fasting](#) (website of Dr. Tim LeCroy, *Vita Pastoralis*)

[Holy Week Resource Guide](#) (website for *Calvin Institute of Christian Worship*)

[Five Family-Friendly Resources for Lent](#) (resources from *Christianity Today*)

[Children's Lenten Guide](#) (Little Way Lent Guide, *Wheatland, PCA*)

[How to explain Ash Wednesday to Children](#) (blog by Robin Floch)

[Songs for Lent](#) (Spotify Playlist)

[Authentic Christianity](#) (sermon by Tim Keller, *The Lent Project* on YouTube)

[Holy Week Resources](#) (streaming media resources, www.ligonier.org)

