

Liturgical Changes in Lent

The season of Lent is a time for introspection, simplicity, discipline, and penitence as we prepare for Easter. The word “Lent” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencton*, referring to the springtime when the days grow longer, brighter, and warmer. In the Church, we too are looking forward to the radiant joys of Easter morning. Lent has traditionally been a season of preparing for this celebration, as converts to the faith underwent intense preparation for their upcoming Baptisms on Easter morning. In Lent, we practice the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and reading Scripture as ways to inwardly and outwardly repent and return to the Lord from the places we have gone astray. At St. Luke’s, we have made many liturgical changes this Lenten season so that our worship might reflect these themes:

- **Purple:** This is the liturgical color that symbolizes the pain and suffering that Christ endured on his way to the cross. It is also the traditional color for royalty and sovereignty, representing Christ’s kingship which we will see more fully as we draw closer to Holy Week.
- **Crucifix:** In place of our bronze altar Cross, we will use a Crucifix in Lent. Gazing upon this revelation of God reminds us both of the depths of God’s love for us and the depths of human sin. The Crucifix may be a jarring symbol, and this is appropriate as the cross was meant to evoke intense emotions. You are encouraged to pray to God with these emotions as you strive to stand up against injustice in our world.
- **Greenery:** In keeping with the mood of simplicity and sharpening our focus, we refrain from the use of floral arrangements in the church and use only greens.
- **Rite I:** During Lent, we will be using Rite I, which uses more of the language from the earlier *Prayer Books*. The shift in language causes us to be more mindful of the words we use to pray, making us more intentional in our prayer. The Eucharistic Prayer is Prayer I, which comes from the Scottish rite in the 1662 Prayer Book and fits the Lenten season.
- **Penitential Order:** We begin the service with the Confession of sin, marking the penitential focus of the season. This prayer of humility and repentance is followed by a *Kyrie*. During this prayer for mercy, you are invited to reflect upon the words of Confession and God’s mercy.
- **Bulletins:** You will notice that bulletin has been reworked to be cleaner and simpler to both reflect the season and have us focus more on the liturgy than the paper bulletin. We are creating welcome card for the pew ends to more fully welcome guests in worship. There will still be an announcement sheet to talk home with you and keep up with information about upcoming events and the prayer list.
- **Ad orientem:** This phrase means “to the east” and refers to the ancient tradition of the Eucharistic celebrant being oriented to the cross; that is, in the same direction as the people. The celebrant will use this prayer posture at the Eucharist, thus enacting a unity of posture and common prayer in our physical orientation.
- **Prayer for Humble Access:** This prayer dates to 1548 and was authored by Thomas Cranmer, drawing on Biblical and ancient Christian liturgies. The prayer hinges on a

“but;” we are plagued by sin, but God’s mercy beckons us to the holy Table to be fed. The focus of this prayer is not our unworthiness, but rather God’s grace and mercy. In Lent, we use this prayer to more intentionally focus on repentance as we prepare to receive the Eucharist.

- ***No Alleluias:*** In keeping with the spirit of penitence, saying and singing “Alleluia” is omitted during the service: in hymns and anthems, in the opening sentences, and at the breaking of the bread (fraction) during Communion. As we catch ourselves where we are accustomed to saying “Alleluia,” we are reminded of the brokenness caused by sin. Abstaining from saying “Alleluia” in Lent prepares us to shout it more joyfully on Easter.
- ***No Blessing:*** In place of the usual blessing, we have a Prayer over the People, coming from the *Book of Occasional Services*. These solemn prayers function to reflect the themes of the day’s prayers and lessons as we depart.
- ***Dismissal:*** We are sent forth with the simple words “Let us bless the Lord,” which comes from one of the earliest forms of blessing that concluded services. It reminds us of our task during Lent - in all things, bless the Lord.