

FEBRUARY 18 - APRIL 5, 2026

# LENT 2026: TOWARD GOD

Allen Temple Baptist Church | Rev. Dr. Jacqueline A. Thompson, Senior Pastor

## Embracing the Lenten Season

This Lenten season, from Ash Wednesday to Resurrection Sunday, we invite believers to reflect, reconnect with God and serve others through spiritual disciplines.

Lent is a time for deeper devotion and strengthening our individual and corporate spiritual practice. Fasting, prayer and spiritual meditation are examples of ways to embrace this important season.



## Week 1 Readings

Each day provides a theme and scripture reading suitable for personal or small group study.

### Wednesday, February 18th

PSALM 51:1-12

FOCUS: CONFESSION

### Thursday, February 19th

JOEL 2:12-17

FOCUS: RECOMMIT

### Friday, February 20th

MATTHEW 6:16-21

FOCUS: REFLECTION

### Saturday, February 21st

JOHN 6:35

FOCUS: REASSURANCE

### Bonus Reading

### Sunday, February 22nd

ROMANS 12:1-2

FOCUS: RENEWAL

# The following actions identify three core principles of Lent.

## Fasting & Prayer

Fasting is a spiritual discipline rooted in the Bible, designed to help individuals cultivate self-control, resist temptation, and listen attentively for God's guidance. (Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9, 18; Matthew 4:2, Matthew 6:16–21).

## Confession & Repentance

Lent presents a period conducive to introspection, a season in which to examine one's life and discern areas requiring spiritual renewal and transformation.

## Charity & Almsgiving

Lent is not only about personal sacrifice, but Almsgiving is also intended to foster an attitude of generosity and community, helping individuals to focus on the needs of others. It strengthens one's spiritual life and bond with neighbors and God.

"In addition to this idea of sacrifice, repentance, and reflection is the notion of "Ad Deum". It is a Latin phrase that means to/toward God. Lent is not just about what we give up. It is also what we take on. So, I have decided to identify something to engage in consistently over the next 40 days that moves me Ad Deum: Toward God!"

PASTOR JACQUELINE THOMPSON





## Prayerfully consider these ways to embrace the spirit of the Lenten Season.

### REFLECT

Carve out additional time in your schedule to shift your focus more intentionally on Jesus through reading in the Gospels and prayer + reflection time.

### RECONNECT

To abide in Christ is to remain in His love and bear fruit that glorifies God (John 15:1–11). Reconnection happens when we dwell in His presence and live out His love. What activities or items can we abstain from that will allow our hearts to focus more on drawing closer to God? Here are a few Ideas: excessive use of cell phones, television, social media, negative speech, gossip, and complaining, shopping.

And if you're like many who might be feeling that the weight of the world makes the idea of "giving up" or abstention more hardship than devotion, make drawing closer to God your primary intention, allowing the motion "toward God" to propel you on this Lenten journey.

### SERVE

What gifts, talents or skills do you have that would be a blessing to a ministry, community organization, school, or family that are not being fully utilized? Pray for God's guidance, and in faith, seek opportunities to bless others with your presence, voice, service & prayers.

ATBC offers several opportunities to practice charity and almsgiving, including volunteer opportunities, for example: Food Distribution, For Sisters Only, the Homeless Ministry, Face Mask Crew and donating to the Benevolence Ministry or the Food Box.

Many seniors who are disabled and cannot attend morning worship enjoy ministry visits, in song, prayer and bible study. Many young teens and young adults need spiritual mentors and guidance counseling from experienced adults, who are followers of Christ.

# Why 40 Days?

The 40 days of Lent commemorate Jesus's 40 days of fasting, prayer, and temptation in the wilderness before beginning His public ministry (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13, Mark 1:12-13). The number 40 also carries additional biblical significance, notably in:

- Moses' 40 days on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:28)
- Elijah's 40-day journey to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8).
- The 40 days of rain during the Great Flood (Genesis 7:12).
- The Israelites' 40 years of wandering in the desert (Numbers 14:33).

# Prayer & Meditation

Begin this journey with an increased devotion to improving your spiritual discipline and relationship with God.

- Morning prayer and meditation are excellent daily practices for drawing closer to God.
- Family and small group prayer helps strengthen our faith.
- Tune in to Noon Bible Study with Pastor Jackie.
- Attend Sunday Worship
- Attend Sunday School
- Dial in to the Wednesday Evening Prayer Call.

# Commitment

- Enhance your Lenten journey with a renewed commitment to God, pray for God's discernment to guide you.
- Remember, "Faith without works is dead." (James 2:26)
- Focus, planning and persistence are vital to keeping commitments. It is also beneficial to have prayer and accountability partners for strength.
- Scheduled calls and group chats to review progress or share praise reports of God's faithfulness is encouraging for all.

**Check your Allen Temple Email for dates, times, and other ways to connect.**