



February 2026

What is Lent and why does it last forty days?

Lent is a journey of preparation for following the way of Jesus.

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday.

Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word lencfen, meaning "lengthen" and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance by all Christians.

Today, Christians focus on relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter." This is why you will see the designation "Sunday in Lent" rather than "Sunday of Lent" in the naming of these Sundays. On each Lord's Day in Lent, while Lenten fasts continue, the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.

LENT
Pray + Fast + Give

**Sunday Worship:
In Sanctuary at
11:15am
&
Sumner Center UMC
Facebook Page**

Visit our Church
Website at:

<http://www.sumnercenter.com>

Donations may be sent to our mailing address:
25378 151st Ave
Spring Valley, Mn 55975

Pastoral Support Team
Pastor Bridget Sheely

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Grace and Peace in the name of Jesus Christ: If you have items you would like to be published in the newsletter, please contact Pastor Bridget by the 3rd Thursday of the preceding month by emailing your information or dropping at Church. The light of God remains to shine bright in our community only by your generous giving heart! If you would like to donate a gift, you may send donations to the address above or deliver it in person during Sunday morning worship service

Calendar of Events

(Subject to change and/or be added to as the need arises)

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 11:15am Worship 	2 	3	4	5	6	7 Ad Council Meeting 10:00am
8 11:15 am Worship  	9	10	11 Confirmation Zoom Class @ 6:30pm	12	13	14 
15 11:15 am Worship 	16 	17  MARDI GRAS	18  7pm Service At Sumner Center UMC	19 Brownsville UMC Noon Potluck Dinner	20	21
22 11:15 am Worship 	23	24	25	26	27	28

February Worship Schedule



February 1, 2026

Pastor Bridget Leading

This week, we look at what are called the Beatitudes, the first part of the Sermon on the Mount. With that in mind what if Jesus began his teaching ministry with a word of encouragement instead of an impossible standard to attain? What if the Beatitudes were a snapshot of the community of faith instead of a measuring rod? What if Jesus was saying, Blessed is the community who makes room for peacemakers? Blessed is the community who makes room for the meek, for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who are poor in spirit. Blessed is the community who makes room for those who mourn at the brokenness of the world, who is unstained by the impurity of the world. Blessed is the community who knows persecution is inevitable and still decides to make room for those the world thinks are unimportant." You see, I think Jesus was trying to get us to look again and see who we are, see what is among us. He was opening those folders we had forgotten and showing us our true selves.



February 8, 2026

Pastor Jon Leading

"You are the salt of the earth," Jesus said to his disciples in today's gospel reading. It was a striking image then and it's a striking one now, but what does it imply for the life of discipleship? The implication for disciples is exceedingly curious: it means that we exist for mixing it up with the world. It means that for us to do our savory gospel task of making this world a better place, we need to be out there, being mixed up into people, culture, and society. Following hard on the heels of his Beatitudes that we read about last week, Jesus is saying that if you're going to live those grace-filled attitudes, then it's not enough to work inside the church community, it's not enough to nurture a strong interior life of spirituality. No, the result of all your piety must be pouring yourself out onto this earth so as to bring out life's complex and beautiful flavors. With that amazing image in mind let us come together and worship Him this day.



February 15, 2026

Pastor Jon Leading

Today we gather on the hinge between the Ordinary Time or season after the Epiphany and the penitential season of Lent. This is the moment that prepares us for that journey, even as it steeled Christ for the path of suffering. Therefore, it is a day of declaration, when we, once again, claim Jesus Christ as our Lord. We see him as he is, in a way, in this moment of Transfiguration. The glory and love we spoke of last week and will speak again at his death and Resurrection, is revealed in a visible way in this mountaintop moment. We don't have to fully understand all that might be happening here, but we do have to look in awe and wonder at the glory of our God. Today is a day of celebration before a season of denial



**Ash Wednesday Service will be held at Sumner Center UMC
7:00pm Service with Imposition of Ashes
Full Parish participation**



February 22, 2026

Pastor Bridget Leading

We're on a journey. That's how we describe the season of Lent. The Lenten Journey. The very concept implies at least two things: one, that we are moving. This isn't a static, sit-and-contemplate event. We often think of Lent as a time of consideration, self-reflection, and introspection. And certainly, there is an element of that inherent in the design of the season. But movement is built into the pattern of the season. We are walking with Christ. And Christ is on his way somewhere. We are on a path; we are moving toward the cross. That's our destination.

Prairieland Parish Events



BROWNSDALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Community Noon Lunch

Thursday, February 19th. 12 O'clock – Noon

Come One – Come All! Bring your friends!

Serving: hot dishes - Salads - Desserts - Beverages

FREE WILL DONATIONS



Prairieland Parish will be gathering as Christ's community each week as we rotate Sanctuaries –

There will be A light meal starting at 6pm Followed by an informal worship/study. This is a beautiful opportunity for us to journey though the Lenten Season together by uniting as a Parish and accepting each other's invitation to praise of His Name in each other's Holy Sanctuaries.

Ash Wednesday – February 18, 2026

Hosted by: Sumner Center UMC

7 pm - No Meal served for this Service.

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Week 1 - Weds – February 25th

6:00pm meal served

Hosted by: Zion UMC, Sargeant

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Week 2 – Weds – March 4th

6:00pm meal served

Hosted by: Racine UMC

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Week 3 - Weds - March 11th

6:00pm meal served

Hosted by: Brownsdale UMC

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Week 4 – Weds – March 18th

6:00pm meal served

Hosted by: Wykoff UMC

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Week 5 – Weds – March 25th

6:00pm meal served

Hosted by: United Church of Grand Meadow

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Good Friday – April 3, 2026

7:00 pm

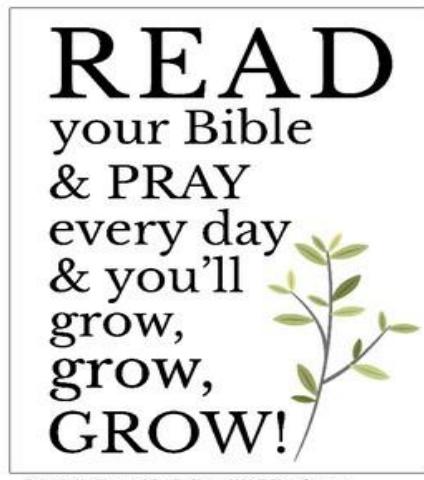
Hosted by: Dexter UMC

No Meal served for this Service



Daily Lenten Scripture Reading Plan

Day	Today's Scripture Reading	Day 24	Luke 7-Luke 9
Day 1	Matthew 1-3 (Ash Weds)	Day 25	Luke 10-Luke 12
Day 2	Matthew 4-6	Day 26	Take a Break (Sunday)
Day 3	Matthew 7-9	Day 27	Luke 13-Luke 14
Day 4	Matthew 10-Matthew 12	Day 28	Luke 15-Luke 16
Day 5	Take a Break (Sunday)	Day 29	Luke 17-Luke 18
Day 6	Matthew 13-Matthew 14	Day 30	Luke 19-Luke 20
Day 7	Matthew 15-Matthew 16	Day 31	Luke 21-Luke 22
Day 8	Matthew 17-Matthew 18	Day 32	Luke 23-Luke 24
Day 9	Matthew 19-Matthew 20	Day 33	Take a Break (Sunday)
Day 10	Matthew 21-Matthew 22	Day 34	John 1-John 2
Day 11	Matthew 23-Matthew 24	Day 35	John 3-John 4
Day 12	Take a Break (Sunday)	Day 36	John 5-John 6
Day 13	Matthew 25-Matthew 26	Day 37	John 7-John 8
Day 14	Matthew 27-Matthew 28	Day 38	John 9-John 10
Day 15	Mark 1-Mark 3	Day 39	John 11-John 12
Day 16	Mark 4-Mark 6	Day 40	Take a Break (Sunday)
Day 17	Mark 7-Mark 9	Day 41	John 13-John 14
Day 18	Mark 10-Mark 12	Day 42	John 15-John 16
Day 19	Take a Break (Sunday)	Day 43	John 17-John 18
Day 20	Mark 13-Mark 14	Day 44	John 19-John 20
Day 21	Mark 15-Mark 16	Day 45	John 21 (Good Friday)
Day 22	Luke 1-Luke 3	Day 46	1 Corinthians 15
Day 23	Luke 4-Luke 6	Day 47	It's Easter!



An Update on the Appointive Cabinet and District Leadership

January 18, 2026

As part of our ongoing work to steward leadership well and to respond faithfully to the realities of ministry in this season, I want to share an update regarding the composition of the appointive cabinet and district superintendent oversight.

Beginning in the coming appointment year, the appointive cabinet will be served by three full-time and two half-time district superintendents (aka conference superintendents). This configuration reflects both careful planning and a spirit of holy experimentation as we seek leadership models that are relational, sustainable, and close to the life of local congregations.

With gratitude, we honor Rev. Laurie Kantonen, who will be rotating off the cabinet after completing a seven-year term of faithful and steady service. Laurie's leadership has shaped clergy care, congregational vitality, and cabinet collaboration in profound ways. We give thanks for her wisdom, dedication, and deep love for the Church.

As part of this transition, we will welcome two leaders rotating onto the appointive cabinet in half-time roles. Rev. Gordon Deuel and Rev. Kirkland Reynolds will serve as half-time superintendents while also continuing half-time appointments in their respective local church settings. Together, they will share oversight of the River Bluffs District, bringing collaborative leadership, complementary gifts, and strong grounding in congregational life to this shared role. A few reflections from Kirkland and Gordon follow this letter.

Several additional district transitions will also take place:

- Rev. Michelle Hargrave will move to oversight of the Prairie Winds District, continuing her strong commitment to clergy support, missional alignment, and adaptive leadership.
- Rev. Woojae Im will assume oversight of the Aurora Sky District, bringing thoughtful leadership and deep attentiveness to the diverse contexts of that district.
- Rev. Becky Jo Messenbrink will continue her faithful service as superintendent of the Headwaters District, providing continuity, stability, and trusted leadership.

This cabinet configuration reflects our belief that leadership in this season must be both collaborative and contextual. By blending full-time and co-vocational superintendency, we are intentionally keeping district leadership close to congregational realities—while ensuring strong connectional oversight and shared discernment at the cabinet table.

These changes are made with prayer, care, and confidence in the gifted leaders who are serving the Church in this moment. As always, we trust the Holy Spirit to guide our shared work, strengthening our capacity to love boldly, serve faithfully, and lead with courage in the days ahead.

In faithful service,
Bishop Lanette Plambeck
Resident Bishop
Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church

Word Search

ADMIRER	ENAMORED
ADORE	ENDEARMENT
AFFECTION	ENVELOPE
AMOROUS	FEBRUARY
ANGEL	FLAME
BALLOONS	FLIRT
BELOVED	FLOWERS
BOUQUET	FONDNESS
CANDY	FRIEND
CARD	GIFT
CARNATION	HEART
CHARMED	HEARTTHROB
CHERISH	HOLIDAY
CHERUB	HONEY
CHOCOLATE	HUG
COURTING	KISS
COURTSHIP	LIKE
CRAZY	LOVE
CRUSH	LOVEBIRDS
CUPID	PINK
DARLING	POEM
DATE	RED
DEAR	ROMANCE
DECORATE	SWEETHEART
DESIRE	SWEETS
DEVOTION	TENDERNESS
DOVES	VALENTINE
EMBRACE	