



Being Love

A LENTEN GUIDE
WEEK 1

Welcome to Lent

As we journey through a new year, everything is a little different. Caring for our neighbors and ourselves during a pandemic has meant a different way of being together, filling our days, and moving through the world. Life is different — and church is different. Yet, the mission and the heart of it all is the same: love God and love our neighbor as we love ourselves. That call is about all of us, as a church, being love in all the places we are.

The season of Lent, a 40-day season of reflection and intention beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending in the celebration of new life on Easter, is part of the ancient, living rhythm of our faith and has been practiced in times and places even more different than today! Lent's continual practice through the centuries reminds us that God is at work in rhythms of renewal and growth, reflection and celebration, grounding and good, in every time and place and way of life — including ours right now.

So this Lenten season, what does it mean to love our neighbor when we are spending more time in our neighborhoods? What does it mean to love God when we are seeking to learn and grow from home? What does it mean to experience God's love for us when we might be spending more time with ourselves than ever!? How do we be a loving church in all the places we are?

The good news is that we can! God invites us to be part of the practice of love and kindness in our world. Lent is a reminder that no matter the circumstances, we can be love through the One that loves us first. And in our shared practice, we can be the church in wider and deeper ways — covering more neighborhoods and family circles — than we ever imagined.

In this Lenten guide we offer a series of daily reflections, activities, and meditations to help you practice love for God, neighbor, and yourself in every place you find yourself. And together, as we journey through Lent, we will find ourselves ever more being love, and being the loving church Jesus calls us to be, everywhere we are.

In Christ,
Jonathan Perry

A handwritten signature in white ink on a blue background. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and reads "Jonathan Perry".

FEBRUARY 17

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession where we find our need for God's saving grace and our connectedness in being God's creation. Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance, sorrow, sacrifice, and a reminder that we were created by God from dust. This reminder comes as we consider a new season of spiritual growth and preparation before Easter. For many, Lent is the opportunity to consider our own spiritual practices in prayer, self-examination, and by taking on other spiritual disciplines. It all begins with the reminder of who we are and whose we are on Ash Wednesday.

Worship Opportunities

ONLINE SERVICE AT 7 PM

Join us online at fumcdenton.com/live or on Facebook. You are welcome to use any household item in place of ashes—some popular choices include glitter, spices, chalk and dirt.

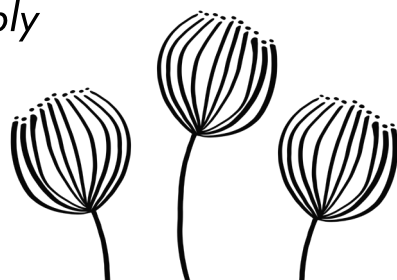
ASHES-TO-GO

Due to inclement weather, this event has been canceled.

DAY 2

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 18

During Lent, we often find ourselves taking on a new challenge, but this year has been particularly challenging as it is. We often are encouraged to fast from something for 40 days, or maybe instead to take on a new practice. While these are great ways to connect spiritually during this time, in many ways, we've already been fasting this year from community and exercising our solitude muscles in ways we never expected we would have to do. In this unique year, we invite you to into a season of reflection with this guide. Each day will offer a bite-sized opportunity to be more intentional in daily life. This guide is intended to be your Lenten "challenge"—an opportunity for meaningful sacrifice, practice, and self-reflection, but in connection with all of us and in small ways. If you've found yourself feeling pressure to act a certain way during this time, we invite you to release yourself from that. If you find yourself skipping a day or a week of this guide, have grace for yourself. Lent isn't meant to be easy, but it's also not meant to stir guilt and shame in our lives. It's meant to reveal, renew, and guide us. Whatever it is you are able to do this year to connect more deeply is a win, and we give you full permission to say no to anything, any task, any practice, any fasting that is not helpful. Today, consider *what expectations might you need to release yourself from to experience full freedom to deeply connect with God during Lent?*



FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 19

Each of us is unique in how we have been created to reflect God in the world around us. We each process differently, think differently, spend time differently, and we all have our own special ways that we self-reflect and discover more about who we are, how we are called, and how we are made. Check out the call to action below and consider, *how is it that you are called to reflect during this time?*

Call to Action

A SEASON OF REFLECTION

Think deeply about what helps you self-reflect. Maybe it's journaling or prayer. Maybe you're someone who discovers more about yourself in conversations and talking. Maybe you find yourself reflecting in small group gatherings or in time alone in thought. Maybe you have a safe space for reflection or a favorite time of day. Whatever it is that works for you, we invite you to intentionally make space in your life for it during this time.

DAY 4

SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 20

*"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can."*

—JOHN WESLEY

As we begin our Lenten journey together as a church family, today we invite you to do something good. Maybe it's something good for a loved one. Maybe it's something good for yourself. Maybe it's something good for a neighbor. *What opportunities for good do you see today?*

