**What is Lent?**

Lent is a season of 40 days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday. The 40 days represent the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring temptation and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time that we use to prepare for Easter through self-examination. It is a season where Christians focus on their relationship with God and grow as disciples. This reflection and growth often occurs in the form of choosing to give up something tangible or to give of ourselves for others.

While you may be aware of this season leading up to Easter, you may wonder how you might observe Lent.

There is no one prescribed way. Instead, we are each encouraged to find our own method of confronting our sinfulness, remembering our mortality, and giving thanks for the gift of salvation we receive through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here are some practices:

**Fasting**

One of the more common practices is to give something up for Lent. Some abstain from chocolate, social media, shopping, or something else through the season. This is a religious practice known as fasting. We fast to reorient ourselves away from the distraction of those things, and back toward God.

**Bible reading**

Another way to reorient your life toward God, is to focus on devotional practices like Bible study and prayer during the season. One way to do this is to begin with the four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These four books of the New Testament focus on the life of Jesus. We will offer a study at RCFUMC *The Final Days* by Matt Rawle. The study will be offered on Wednesday evenings beginning March 12 at 5:45 pm and on Thursday afternoons beginning March 6 at 3:30 pm. The study will compare the four gospels while focusing on themes of justice, poverty, freedom and love.

**Prayer**

In the busyness of our everyday lives, prayer can sometimes get squeezed out. Lent is a wonderful time to intentionally work toward finding more time in your life for prayer. You can experiment with different ways to pray during the season through journaling, art, music or walking in nature. You can use the “Give God Ten for Lent” calendar to record your prayer journey.

**Service**

Another way to observe a holy Lent is to take on a new way of serving. Throughout the 40 days of the season, you can adopt a new habit of volunteering in the community, making special financial gifts to service organizations, or participating in a small group. You can look for small groups that may interest you on the RCFUMC Lenten Calendar of Events.

**Worship**

Rapid City First United Methodist Church will offer a variety of times and days for worship during the Lenten season. Check the RCFUMC Lenten Calendar of Events to find services beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending with daily services during Holy Week.

**Children’s Education**

You can also educate your children about Lent. Use the Family Lent Calendar for ideas to incorporate into family life every day during the season. There will also be learning opportunities every Sunday morning during Sunday School Connections where students will use hands-on activities, sensory experiences and conversation to learn about Jesus and the promise of Easter in their lives.

However you choose to take the Lenten journey, it is our prayer that you enter Easter morning refreshed, renewed and excited to share the good news of a risen Savior and a loving God!

