

Lenten Disciplines for 2026

The season of Lent is forty-six days long. It consists of forty “ordinary” days and six Sundays. This year, it begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18th, and ends on the Saturday before Easter, which is April 4th.

In the Christian Church, there is a long tradition of giving up something for Lent, like a favorite food or activity. Others choose to start a new, healthy habit during Lent, like daily exercise or healthier food choices. All of these are good things, and I encourage you to think about one of these options.

But in addition to those physical disciplines, I would also like to suggest three *spiritual* disciplines for you to consider during this season of Lent.

1. Regular Worship

I encourage you, as much as possible, to make an effort to be at every worship service on the Wednesdays and Sundays of Lent. Regular worship is a faith-building and life-changing routine. And if you are not worshipping regularly right now, then Lent is a great time to start.

2. Daily Bible Reading

Some people prefer to do their daily Bible reading by following a devotional book, or by reading online devotions at websites like crosswalk.com. But I want to add an extra challenge for Lent. Starting on Ash Wednesday, try reading one chapter of the Gospel of Matthew every day. That will get you through the first twenty-eight days of Lent. Then finish the season by reading one Psalm per day, whichever ones you choose.

3. A Random Act Of Kindness

I like to have this as the third Lenten discipline every year. At least once, during the season of Lent, choose a person that you know who has a special need, and do an act of kindness for that person. Maybe the person has a physical issue, and you can help them by cleaning up their yard or driving them to an appointment. Or maybe someone has a financial need and you can help them with a monetary gift. You can put your name on the gift or you can simply write “from a friend at First Lutheran.”

2026 Lenten Wednesday Sermon Series**“Beneath The Cross Of Jesus”****(Eight Characters in The Passion Story)****Part 3 – Wednesday, March 4****“Pontius Pilate” Pastor Bill Shields****Part 4 – Wednesday, March 11****“The Two Thieves” Pastor Matt Shields****Part 5 – Wednesday, March 18****“John and Mary (The Mother of Jesus)” Pastor Bill Shields****Part 6 – Wednesday, March 25****“Nicodemus” Pastor Matt Shields**

A Prayer for Lent 2026

Our Father in Heaven,

As we walk through the season of Lent, and stand beneath the cross of Jesus, help us to see his passion through new eyes. Remind us that Jesus suffered and died **for us**. And help us to live our lives in thankfulness and praise, until the day when our eyes see Jesus face to face in Heaven.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

*Special announcements for the bulletin, or the screen, need to be to the office **by Thursday morning**. Call, leave a message, email, or drop off a note.*
Newsletter deadline will be the 20th day of March for the April Newsletter.

Office Hours: 9-12 & 1-4 Mon. – Thurs.
Website: www.flcprinceton.org
Check us on Facebook.
Phone: 1-815-875-1685
Email: office.flcprinceton@gmail.com

Council Summary – February 2026

January minutes and financial reports were approved.

Council Election: Keith Cain; President, Rick Cook; Vice-President, Lani Swinford; Corresponding Secretary. Kevin Martin appointed Treasurer and Cindy Pierson appointed Financial Secretary.

Committee Liaisons: Ken Schoof – Property, Chris Balensiefen – Service & Mission, Lani Swinford – Outreach & Fellowship, Donna Monier – Youth & Education, Rick Cook – Worship & Music, Keith Cain – Finance.

Pastor's report – regular monthly activities, 4 worship services in Jan., 9 calls, 8 meetings, 19 Prayer groups/Bible Studies/Classes, Officiated at graveside service for Irene Nordstrom, used 5 vacation days. Annual Meeting Jan. 25, Greenfield Chapel Service Feb. 19, Wittenberg Door Feb. 26, Ash Wed. Feb. 18. We will host "The Living Last Supper" presentation on March 8th at 2:00pm.

Administrator's report – January attendance 90 in person, 73 views. Council approved a wedding to be held here on August 29th, 2026 for Lacey Christ & Josiah Johnston. Our current Microsoft program will no longer support our Power Point Program by this fall. We will need to have all of our computers upgraded.

Property – Parsonage washing machine leaked, problem resolved, additional hymn holders repaired, discussed ceiling fans in sanctuary, vent fans in upstairs restrooms, service contract for alarm system, new law will require us to install locks on elevator doors by 2029, approved bid from Elmore Heating & Air to service two small boilers & air conditioning in the sanctuary. Council approved the contract.

Service & Mission – Benevolence distribution for February: Arukah \$1000, Pilgrim Park \$1000, Jan. 31 Mobile Food Pantry served 111 households & 257 individuals. Next Mobile Food is March 26. Lenten Denial for 2026: Pastor's Discretionary Fund, Buddy Bags, Farm Stew & Samaritan's Purse. Council approved.

Outreach & Fellowship – Feb. Food Challenge is underway & going well. There will be a sign-up for cookies for "The Living Last Supper" event on March 8th, March 20th will be Euchre night.

Youth & Education – VBS dates July 12 – July 16, curriculum will be Rainforest Falls by Group Publishing.

Worship & Music – Lenten plans discussed, soup suppers will be organized, singers contacted for Holden Evening Prayer, contact Julia about palms and flowers for Easter, confirmands to be measured for robes. Discussion about problems with the sound system.

Finance – At the end of January, we are - \$9,762.

AT YOUR SERVICE – ATTENTION

Please look closely at the At Your Service sheet for this month. There are many dates & assignments because of more services. Holy Week is listed on the back of the sheet.

ALTAR GUILD

*March – June Ohlson, Cindy Pierson,
Laurie Anderson
April – Marilynne Kloster, JoAnne Kloeping
May – Mary Ann Smith, Lynn Holland*

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Tuesday, March 3rd

1:00pm – Library Committee
7:00pm – Property, Youth,
Service & Mission, Finance

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, March 10th

3:30PM – COUNCIL MTG.

PRAYER SHAWL GROUP

10:00am – Tuesday, March 10 & 24

QUILTERS

1:00pm – Thursday, March 12 & 26

Choir Practices

6:00pm Wednesdays
during Lent.

Circle Meetings

Tuesday, March 17th

9:30am – Rebekah Circle
3:00pm – Lydia Circle

Super Bowl Snack Sale

\$426.80 will go to Second Story!

Thank you!

Altar Flowers

Open dates:

*All of March is open
as well as April 5 & 12*



Anniversaries

March

- 3/7 – TJ & Sara Scruggs
- 3/17 – Joella & Chris Balensiefen
- 3/22 – Sharon & Steve Saunders



March

- Melissa Cain 3/1
- Kathleen Reussow 3/2
- Lois Chally 3/5
- Mike Eggers 3/7
- Kevin Pinter 3/7
- Bob Prusator 3/9
- Ty Holland 3/10
- Grayson Scruggs 3/10
- Alex Smith 3/13
- Brad Fine 3/15
- Joanne Sheldon 3/16
- Steve Purl 3/17
- Jillian Swinford 3/17
- Cindy Pierson 3/18
- Terri Pinter 3/18
- Martice Vernon 3/18
- Adalyn Busche 3/24
- Jim Scruggs 3/25
- Paityn Johnson 3/28
- Jerry Carver 3/30
- Joan Chase 3/31
- Elsie Burke 3/31
- David Cotter 3/31



Confirmation

Wednesdays at 6:00pm

*Confirmation will not meet on
March 11, & March 25*

Pastor's Bible Study

Wednesdays at 11:00am

Thursdays at 6:00pm

No Bible Study on April 1st & 2nd

**February Food
Challenge**



Hamburger Helper & peanut butter
Canned fruit & syrup

Canned chicken & white rice

Canned ravioli & any snacks

(these are items the Pantry can use anytime)

The churches accepting our Challenge were:
1st Christian and Evangelical Covenant.

Total numbers will be available next month.

EUCHRE NIGHT

CALLING all Euchre players...

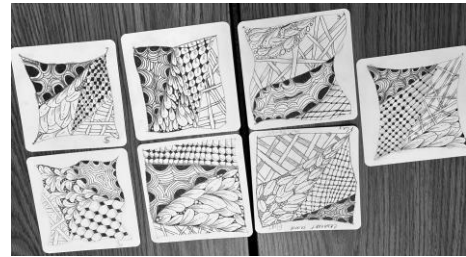
Join us in Fellowship Hall March 20th
beginning at 6:00pm for a night of

'Apps n BEER' (root) ♠♣♠♣

Sign up in the back of church...

bring an appetizer to share with all –
drinks will be provided.

Questions see Lani or Joanne



7 ladies enjoyed the Zentangle Class on
Feb. 15th. Here is a sample of their work.

Lenten Denial Offerings 2026:

Pastor's Discretionary Fund

Buddy Bags

Farm Stew

Samaritan's Purse

*Envelope included in this newsletter for your
use. You may choose the ones you prefer. If you
don't check a box, it will be divided among the 4
choices.

1st Communion Classes

*For 5th graders or older who have not yet
received 1st Communion instruction*

March 29th & April 12th

during the Sunday School hour.

First Communion is scheduled for

Sunday, April 19th.

**Our next Mobile Food Pantry is
Thursday, March 26th**

B.C. Fairgrounds

Volunteers needed by 9am

Bring wagons

OWLS Maundy Thursday

Worship & Communion

1:30pm - Thursday, April 2

Cookie Fellowship to follow.

**Schedule of
Lenten Services**

Wednesdays
March 4, 11, 18, 25
5:30pm – Soup Supper
6:00pm – Confirmation
March 4 & 18
6:00pm – Choir Practice
7:00pm – Worship

Please sign-up to bring soup, dessert or help in the kitchen.

The Living Last Supper

Presentation By St. John's of Peru

1st Lutheran is hosting
Sunday, March 8th
2:00pm

Please sign-up to bring some cookies for fellowship after the event.
(This is the Sunday that the clocks change & jump forward 1 hr.)

OLD WHEELS MEETING

Saturday, March 7th
8:00am
@ Scruggs cabin
Breakfast served

Our Sympathy to

Bernice Schuetz
Bernice's brother, Larry Fisher,
died unexpectedly Feb. 9th.



Set your clocks ahead 1 hour on Saturday night, March 7th.

Continued prayers for:

Cancer patients: Gary Schail, Barb Amrein (*friend of Mary Lee Twidell- Lymphoma*), **Tina Nutter** (*stepmom to Gage & Dash Nutter-cancer*), **Steve Allen** (*brother of April Buchanan*), **Eric Davis** (*brother-in-law of Rob Buchanan*), **Rodney Smith** (*brother of Duane Smith*), **Lisa Woodruff** (*niece of Bernice Schuetz*), **Steve Cook** (*cousin of Rick Cook*), **Logan Kari** (*2 yr. old nephew of Debbie Lindberg, aggressive brain cancer*), **Becky Wicinski** (*sister of Tim Ploch, cancer*), **Leslie Johnson** (*cancer, started treatments*), **Michael Frandsen** (*return of cancer*), **Rich Still** (*husband of Sharon Polson Dyer, stage 4 stomach cancer*), **Walt Stanley** (*father of Alan Stanley, cancer*),

Others: Dawn Dabler (*family of Mary Lee Twidell & Nancy Hartz- tumors on liver non-cancerous*), **Kim Bazant** (*daughter of Jackie Pilcher, on kidney transplant list*), **Sarah Smith** (*friend of Judy Carlsen – recovering from fall & injuries*), **Nick Smith** (*health issues*), **Linda Bacon** (*back pain*), **Carolyn Mahon** (*at Bounce Back at Liberty Village Princeton*), **Keith Cain** (*Giant Cell Arteritis, causing severe headaches & vision issues*), **Val Blythe** (*problems with site of recent heart surgery & injured hand severely*), **Jamie Hedger** (*sister of Chris Anderson, premature birth of son*), **Everett**, *who is struggling to survive*), **Jerry Carver** (*hospitalized in Peoria*)

**Lutheran World Relief
Personal Care Kits**

LCW will be collecting the following items through the season of Lent:

- Dark colored, light or medium-weight bath towels
- Sturdy wide-tooth combs
 - (NOT picks)
- Metal nail clippers
- ~~Toothbrushes~~ (*have plenty*)
- Bath-size soap in original packaging

Donated items can be left at the back of the church through the months of February and March. Thank you.

Best Wishes to
Sharon Polson Dyer &
Howard Richard Still
united in marriage on
February 15th in Peoria
Pastor Shields officiated.

Grief Share Sessions
Mondays, March 2 – June 1
1:00 – 3:00pm
Evangelical Covenant Church
815-875-2124

ASPIRE
1 Night – 3 Hours
Just for Women
Friday, March 6, 2026
Bunker Hill Church, Buda, IL
7:00pm Show
6:00pm Doors open
Music by Mia Koehne
General Admission - \$30
VIP/Reserved - \$40
Groups of 10 or more \$25
Purchase tickets at 480-812-1100 or
online at: aspirewomensevents.com

CLUB 56 – JR. HIGH
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
We would appreciate snacks donated to our
Jr. High After School Program. Please stick to
those snacks on the shopping lists located in
the back of the sanctuary.

Without ambition, one starts nothing. –Ralph Waldo Emerson

Have the guts to keep making mistakes. –Holly Near



HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday – March 29 – 9:30am
Kids in parade of palms &
singing with the choir

Maundy Thursday – April 2
1:30pm OWLs Worship & Communion
7:00pm Communion

Good Friday – April 3
7:00pm Tenebrae Service

Easter Sunday – April 5
7:00am & 9:30am Worship & Communion
8:00am Breakfast

Walnut Community Bible Church
A Night of Comedy &
Inspiration at the Rock
Friday, March 6, 2026
7:00pm
Tickets \$20/each or 4/\$70
Featuring comedian Jody Fuller
& Pastor Brian Trent
Purchase tickets at eventbrite.com,
Call the church at 815-379-2645
Or scan the QR code on the poster by the office
here at First.

The smallest seed of faith is better than the
largest fruit of happiness. –Henry David Thoreau

Keep your face to the sun and you will never
see the shadows. –Helen Keller

Give light, and the darkness will disappear of
itself. –Desiderius Erasmus

If a window of opportunity appears, don't pull
down the shade. –Tom Peters

EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORM

Flowers may be ordered through the church at \$19.00 per plant. There are no color choices on flowers.

_____ Single Lily _____ Begonia _____ Tulip

My plant/s is a memorial to: _____

My plant/s is in honor of: _____

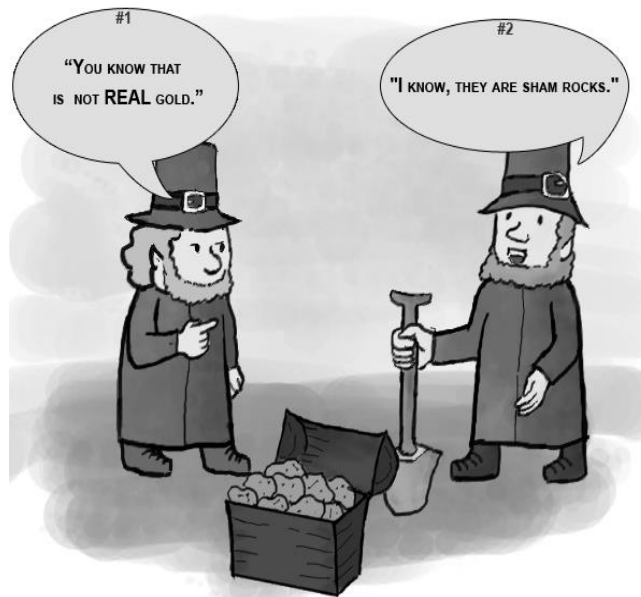
Order form & payment may be placed in the offering or turned into the office By March 25th. Make checks out to "First Lutheran Church". Plants may be picked up after worship on Easter Sunday, April 5th.

Signed _____



The heart of a fool is in his mouth, but the mouth of a wise man is in his heart. –Ben Franklin

When science discovers the center of the Universe, a lot of people will be disappointed to find they are not it. –Bernard Bailly



The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart. –Helen Keller

What kills a skunk is the publicity it gives itself. --Abraham Lincoln