

Created for Community...

Lent 2021

Atonement Lutheran Church
Billings, Montana



February 17 - Created for Community... with God the Creator

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to live in community with you and to serve our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.



(Please take for yourself this bulletin, a two-sided slip of paper with the words “Giving Up...” on one side, and “Taking On...” on the other, and a pen.)

Weekly Meditation Guide for Reflection

1. Find an open prayer station in the sanctuary.
2. Sit in silence and focus on your breathing.
3. Slowly pray through Prayer of the Day (page 2).
4. Read scripture portion (page 3) by *lectio divina*:

Read the first time: listen for a word or phrase that stands out to you

Read the second time: listen for a way in which God is speaking to you personally

Read the third time: listen for a way in which God is speaking to the community or communities of which you are a part

5. Engage in the Focal Activity (on back page):

Focal Scripture for the Day

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Focal Activity for the Day

- a. One tradition at the beginning of Lent is “Giving Up” something (“fasting” – not just foods, but other practices as well). Consider the following when considering your own practice:
 - What distracts you from being in community with God? ...or with other people?
 - By giving up something for yourself, how will it benefit others?
 - Will making this sacrifice bring you inner joy (and not so much outward recognition)?
 - Commit to doing this and write it on the “Giving up...” side of the paper.
- b. This year, think also about “Taking On” something. Consider the following when considering your own practice:
 - What will aid you with being in community with God? ...or with other people?
 - By taking on something for yourself, how will it benefit others?
 - Will taking this on bring you inner joy (and not so much outward recognition)?
 - Commit to doing this and write it on the “Taking On...” side of the paper.
- c. Take this activity page home with you as a reminder to your commitment through your 40 days of Lent... and beyond.
- d. Feel free to remain as long as you need in the sanctuary.